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PUBLICATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF THE ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA

CONN. SOC.
PUBL. NO. 1

No. 1

WHY REMEMBER THE FATHERS

BY THE
REV. JOHN GAYLORD DAVENPORT, D.D.

NEW HAVEN, CONN., A.D. 1900

1786420

The Order of the Founders and Patriots of America

The ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA was incorporated in the city of New York, March 18, 1896. The objects for which it was established are indicated in the second article of the Constitution, as follows:

1. To bring together and associate men whose ancestors struggled together for life and liberty, home and happiness, in this land, when it was a new and unknown country, and whose line of descent from them comes through patriots who sustained the colonies in the struggle for independence in the Revolutionary War.

2. To teach reverent regard for the names and history, character and perseverance, deeds and heroism, of the founders of this country and their patriotic descendants.

3. To inculcate patriotism in the Associates and their descendants.

4. To discover, collect and preserve records, documents, manuscripts, monuments and history relating to the first colonists, their ancestors and descendants.

5. To commemorate and celebrate events in the history of the Colonies and the Republic.

6. Other historical and patriotic purposes.

The Connecticut Society of the Order of the Founders and Patriots of America was organized May 9, 1896. The following are the Charter Associates of the Society:

Maj. Frank William Mix,
Charles Mather Glazier,
John Emery Morris,
Francis Durando Nichols,
James Emery Brooks,
Jonathan Flynt Morris,
William Charles Russell,
Col. Edward Everett Sill,
Col. Charles Alexander Jewell.

OFFICERS OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY

1898–99

COL. NORRIS GALPIN OSBORN, GOVERNOR, . . *New Haven*
REV. JOHN GAYLORD DAVENPORT, D.D., DEPUTY GOVERNOR, ... *Waterbury*
REV. DRYDEN WILLIAM PHELPS, CHAPLAIN, . . *New Haven*
COL. EDWARD EVERETT SILL, SECRETARY, . . *New Haven*
ROBERT CROMER GLAZIER, TREASURER, . . . *Hartford*
ERNEST BRADFORD ELLSWORTH, STATE ATTORNEY, *Hartford*
WILLIAM FERRIS WATERBURY, REGISTRAR, . . *Stamford*
HENRY BALDWIN, HISTORIAN, ... *New Haven*

COUNCILORS.

(*Three Years.*)

GEORGE FRANKLIN NEWCOMB, ... *New Haven*
WILLIAM NEWTON PARKER, ... *New Haven*
HON. JAMES DUDLEY DEWELL, ... *New Haven*

(*Two Years.*)

CHARLES ABNER PELTON, ... *Middletown*
THOMAS SEDGWICK STEELE, ... *Hartford*
WILLIAM HANMER TALCOTT, ... *Hartford*

(*One Year.*)

JOHN EMERY MORRIS, ... *Hartford*
JAMES EMERY BROOKS, ... *Hartford*
HENRY BALDWIN, ... *New Haven*

WHY REMEMBER THE FATHERS

AN ADDRESS AT A MEETING OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF THE ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA, AUGUST 6, 1898 . . . . . .

BY THE

REV. JOHN GAYLORD DAVENPORT, D.D.

ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA

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nos.1,3-4,6, (1900-1902)

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THE TUTTLE, MOREHOUSE & TAYLOR COMPANY.
NEW HAVEN, CONN.

WHY REMEMBER THE FATHERS.

A short time since I suggested to an excellent brother who is possessed of ample qualifications that he connect himself with the Order of the Founders and Patriots of America. I knew that his genial personality and scholarly habit would afford a valuable addition to our brotherhood. After having read, marked and inwardly digested the literature upon the subject with which I favored him, and given due consideration to the proposition made, he replied, in substance, that without assuming to decide for others or even seeming to criticise their course, he judged that it would be better for him to devote the money that membership with us would involve to the cause of foreign missions, adding that the tendency of good people in our day is toward too great self-indulgence. The point which he courteously made was this, that association in such an organization as ours, while perhaps well enough, yet savors somewhat of the neglect of broader and higher interests, through devotion to a certain, very likely elevated, form of mere self-gratification.

The reply led me to consider the subject somewhat more fully than I had done and candidly to answer the question whether or not there is advantage in active participation in one of these patriotic societies, such as compensates for the expenditure of time and effort and money that may be involved; whether or

not the pursuit of the ends sought by such a society lays one open to the charge of culpable self-indulgence. I have thought that perhaps the first of the series of papers which it is proposed that our Connecticut Society of the Founders and Patriots should issue might profitably deal with this matter. To discuss it exhaustively is not my intention, but simply to present two or three reasons for believing, as I most heartily do, that it is wise and right for us to devote ourselves to the objects set before us in the constitution of our society.

Those objects, in brief, are as follows :

To teach reverent regard for the names, character, history and heroism of the founders of this country and their patriot descendants.

To discover and preserve whatever may throw light upon their spirit and their deeds, their ancestry and their posterity.

To commemorate and celebrate events in the history of the Colonies and the Republic.

To inculcate patriotism in the associates and their descendants.

To secure these ends by bringing together "men whose ancestors struggled together for life and liberty, home and happiness, in this land, when it was a new and unknown country and whose line of descent from them comes through patriots who sustained the Colonies in the struggle for independence in the Revolutionary war."

The purpose of the organization, in a word, is to bring us, the descendants of worthy sires, so fully into touch with them that we may appreciate, to the fullest

extent possible, their spirit, their motives, their sacrifices, their heroic endeavors in the interest of civil and religious liberty, and may render them, in every way, the honor that is their due. And the question is, Is it well for us, on the whole, thus to look back and suffer the great past to throw its spell over our present? To me this seems desirable.

1. For its effect upon our character. The influence of soul upon soul and of life upon life is a matter as subtle and mysterious as that of one planet upon another. That it is a matter of the utmost importance we must all admit. Intimate association with certain people is like that of the rose with the sun and the dew, it stimulates us to the best of which we are capable. At once life seems well worth the living; moral excellence puts on unwonted beauty; we instinctively choose the highest ends and strive for the noblest achievements, and we go on our way with a hopefulness that brightens as the morning. Certain other people have upon us an influence that is precisely the opposite. Their companionship causes us to doubt where we had trusted, to criticize where we had admired, to despair of ourselves and of the world, to find ourselves groping in mist that grows denser as we advance. Every man puts forth his hand and moulds, either for better or for worse, for comeliness or for deformity, those with whom he comes in contact. And the force of his influence is according to the strength of his personality. He may be a true or an imaginary character, contemporaneous or historic, it makes but little difference. The boy is thrilled by the daring of a William Tell or of a Hobson, and the

feat of the one is as real as that of the other. We of to-day admire philanthropy in Florence Nightingale as truly as in Clara Barton. The present generation is as profoundly impressed by the sight of Washington praying amid the forests of Valley Forge as by that of Captain Philip, after the destruction of Spain's splendid fleet, declaring his faith in Almighty God. It is character, unselfish, exalted, patriotic, consecrated to noble ends, whether this appear in the world of fiction, among the epic pictures of history or amid the activities of the current hour, that furnishes the ideal that charms and that stimulates. Such being the law of our nature, as unescapable as that of the reflection of light or the conduct of electricity, it becomes us, if we would develop within ourselves the worthiest traits, to keep in touch with the worthiest characters. And no American who aspires to this can afford to ignore those who stand among the beginnings of our American history, exhibiting a manliness that is as unique as it is strong and admirable. Least of all should those who share their blood and bear their honored names fail to live in communication with their deathless and potent spirit. The stones that mark their resting place are crumbling to dust, but their personality and work should vividly linger in the minds of men, if for no other reason, that that which was grand and vital in their character may impress itself upon their successors amid the toils and responsibilities of the passing time.

For one I love to recall the peculiarities of the Founders and dwell in thought upon that which makes them forever memorable. What idealists they

were! What a splendid vision of the Kingdom of God by them to be established upon these western shores hid from their view the hardships of their undertaking! How real to their perception and all-important were the spiritual and the eternal! They had forsaken the advantages of a well-established civilization for the deprivations and perils of the howling wilderness. Memories of the hawthorn hedges of sunny England were in their minds; echoes of the sacred minstrelsy of that favored land swept through their brain; the great men and the great events of their native country towered before them; they loved the civil order and revered the ancient monarchy of that best of realms; the balmy isle of their birth was most dear; yet dearer to them than all else was that ideal state of which they dreamed, the "Utopia" fairer than Sir Thomas More's, whose beautiful and imperishable proportions were to rise at the summons of their prayer and toil. We think of them as somewhat austere and rugged and as eminently practical, and so they were. But above all they were poets; "seeing the light that never was on land or sea," catching harmonies such as were never woven on earth, feeling the force of motives such as the mass of mankind had but feebly recognized, stirred to the depths of their being and to the farthest outreach of their life by the invisible and the divine.

What lovers of learning they were! Brought up under the shadow of the great universities, their leaders trained in those classic halls, their religion one of intelligent choice rather than of exuberant emotion, there must for them be educated mind to declare and

educated mind to hear the Gospel. The thought of a ministry uninstructed in classic lore was repulsive. Hence from the earliest time provision was made for the education of the children, and amid their poverty, while as yet the difficulties of establishing themselves had not been overcome, the foundations of the institution for the higher learning must be laid. That date upon the corner-stone of Harvard College, "1636," speaks most eloquently of the character of those to whom we look back to-day.

How loyal they were to law! To their conception the God whom they adored was essentially and primarily a Sovereign. Their religion taught them reverence for the divine statute and for the human as the echo of the divine. They lived upon abstractions, making them their meat and their drink. They needed no visible monarch to restrain them from evil doing. They were submissive heart and soul to the invisible enactment, to the righteous principle which had emanated from heaven and was fundamental to such human society as was God-approved. Not but that on occasion they could defy the authority of the king, and do it with a good conscience, because feeling themselves in so doing loyal to a higher law than his. As for example, when but a few miles from this spot the regicides were secreted, and the pastor boldly preached from the text: "Make thy shadow as night in the midst of noon; hide the outcasts; betray not him that wandereth." Or as when Sir Edmund Andross came to Hartford to vacate the charter and that precious document was encased in living oak rather than in the eager hands of the royal messenger.

And with all their regard for the ideal and the intangible, how intensely human they were! The nearer we come to them the more clearly we see that they were men of like passions with us, obliged to restrain the wayward tendency and to cultivate the right aspiration, fully stocked with the impulses that pertain to our common humanity, showing the heart-beat that gave our own its rhythm. Although their heads were among the clouds, their feet were planted squarely upon this material globe and life with them was practical, full of economies and of pains-taking, conducted with shrewdness and self-denial. They believed in the family and exalted the home with its vicarious suffering and its divine charities. The "old, old story" was told in quaint phrase by the shores of Massachusetts Bay and of Long Island Sound, and the coquetry and sentiment of youth, the romance that in every instance is as new and charming as in Eden, brightened many a page of the otherwise dreary history. Families of children that would have rejoiced the heart of the latest reformer filled the low-ceiled rooms with the music that is the gladdest of all. The drama of domestic life with all that it involves of humor and pathos, of anxious prevision and of profound emotion, was enacted by the Founders, and after a manner which in many respects might well be imitated by their successors.

To come into contact with those fathers of ours is to feel the touch of strong, noble natures, in which the real and the ideal were singularly blended, and by them to be uplifted from the sordid and selfish views, so prevalent in our day, into an atmosphere that

purifies while it invigorates. For its effect upon our own character, the tonic and the stimulus it can but afford, we need to clasp hands with those who here lived and built and loved and dreamed two and a half centuries ago.

2. We may well do this for the help it may give us as citizens of the Republic. Scarcely any other portion of the life of the early settlers is so full of interest to us as their struggle with the great problem of civil government which here confronted them. Given a company of Englishmen, with 800 years of monarchy behind them, with reverence for the throne in every drop of their blood, with convictions respecting the divine right of kings well nigh as positive as those they held regarding the supremacy of God, with a loyalty to their own country which all her cruel persecution could not destroy, and a chronic heartache over the events that had separated them from her; given such a company, thrust out into the wilderness with 3,000 miles of ocean rolling between them and the land of their nativity, forced by the necessities of their situation to provide for themselves such political institutions as should secure them protection and order, compelled by the terms of their coming to do this in harmony with their allegiance to the Kingdom of God, the question being, as the patriarch of New Haven said, "how to order a frame of civil government in a plantation whose design is religion"—given these things and you have before you the elements of a most interesting problem, whose outworking can but afford an absorbing study in political science.

Had the founders at the first been charged with

holding republican ideas they would stoutly have denied it. In fact, when Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrims, was accused of embodying democracy in his church polity, he maintained,—it is hard to see just upon what ground,—that his system was "plainly aristocratical." And yet this same Robinson, in the letter of loving advice and instruction that he gave to his people on their departure for America, used language which throbs with the very life-blood of democracy. Said he:

"Whereas you are to become a body politic, using civil government among yourselves, and are not furnished with any persons of special eminency above the rest to be chosen unto office of government, let your wisdom and godliness appear, not only by choosing such persons as do entirely love and will diligently promote the common good, but also in yielding unto them all due honor and obedience in their lawful administrations; not beholding the ordinariness of their persons, but God's ordinance for your good; nor being like the foolish multitude, who more honor the gay coat than either the virtuous mind of man or the glorious ordinance of the Lord. But you know better things, and that the image of the Lord's power and authority which the magistrate beareth is honorable in how mean persons soever. And this duty you may the more willingly and conscionably perform because you are, at least for the present, to have only them for your ordinary governors which yourselves shall make choice of for that work."

In these words there is embodied all for which the people, as such, have been clamoring through the cen-

turies, viz., that civil authority resides with the people and that the power to exercise it is conferred not through some chance of birth or worldy circumstance, but by the choice of the body politic. A principle was here involved which I can scarcely believe that Robinson himself accepted in the fulness of its meaning and its bearing. Although very likely his residence in republican Holland had in a measure, probably unconsciously to himself, modified his views.

In the cabin of the Mayflower the Pilgrims, under the influence of their pastor's words, entered into a compact, in which their loyalty to the King is affirmed at the same time that they assert for themselves authority to take such political action as their needs and that of the kingdom of God may require.

"We whose names are underwritten do by these presents solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and of one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the end aforesaid, viz., the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith, and the honor of our King and country.

"By virtue hereof we are to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices from time to time as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony—unto which we promise all due submission and obedience." They then chose John Carver, a man godly and well approved among them, their Governor for that year, apparently considering him the personification of all such statutes and ordi-

nances as were requisite, for they thought it unnecessary to enact any laws or in any way to define the powers of the magistrate. Under this simple compact, democracy undefiled, the Plymouth Colony lived for many a year.

The Puritan immigrants who arrived in this country a little later were more fully purposed at the first not to break with the English church or state. They would maintain their allegiance to both and seek the reformation of all abuses from within. But the air of the new world quickly wrought in them a change. In their ecclesiastical arrangements they soon came to adopt the democratic platform of Plymouth, and their town meetings and all the administration of the affairs of the colonies proceeded upon a similar principle. The authority of the mother country was still recognized, monarchy was the law of the State, but practically the republic was established not only in every church but in every township. The people named their own magistrates, levied their own taxes, adopted such laws as they thought needful. They were training themselves in the practice of self-government, without considering whereunto the thing would grow.

In April, 1638, Thomas Hooker preached to the General Court of the towns along the river a sermon which is said to contain the "earliest known suggestion of a fundamental law, enacted not by royal charter nor by concession from any previously existing government, but by the people themselves—a primary and supreme law by which the government is constituted, and which not only provides for the free choice of magistrates by the people, but also sets the bounds

and limitations of the power and place to which each magistrate is called. Eight months later the fundamental laws embodying these principles, for the first time in human history, were 'sentenced, ordered and decreed.'"

New Haven at first took a narrower view, and in attempting to carry out the idea of a theocracy over this region restricted political rights to church members. But the story of the development of the broader conception, of the growth of the revolutionary principle of equal political rights for all, the gradual appreciation of the real significance of democracy, the increasing jealousy of the people lest their privileges be invaded, until the consciousness of liberty and the enthusiasm for freedom united all the New England colonies, submerging in the one beautiful and holy flame all local differences, drawing them together and making their cause a unit against their common foes; the story of the unfolding of the democratic sentiment throughout this section until at length it extended its beneficent sway to all the dwellers upon the Atlantic coast and in due time secured the independence of this land and the establishment of the world's greatest republic, and led on to the supremacy and glory in which as a nation we exult to-day; all this, I say, affords one of the grandest possible studies in political science. And with perhaps one exception, politics is the most important theme that can occupy the human mind. No one can fully appreciate the advantages that we as a people enjoy who has not traced the growth of democracy from its beginnings to its magnificent flowering in the United States of America. No complete

view of the matter can be attained unless we come into close communion with the thought and aspiration and outreaching and unconscious achievement of the founders of the nation.

3. Once more, we need to understand their life in its somewhat narrow conditions, that we may appreciate the progress that has been made and may take an appropriate view of the future. It is very difficult for us to transfer ourselves in thought from the verge of the twentieth century to the middle of the seventeenth in any such way as really to understand what existence here in New England must have meant to those who then bore our names. If a picture of the territory included within the Colony of New Haven as it was on the morning of August 6, 1648, two hundred and fifty years ago, could be set before us I suspect that the scene would seem as unfamiliar as any landscape of Porto Rico furnished us in the morning papers. No living person could describe it with anything of accuracy. Our boldest efforts of imagination will fail to bring us near the truth. The time is ten years after the settlement of New Haven. A few little villages appear at intervals along the coast, but the primeval forest holds sway over a large portion of the scene. The roads are little more than bridle paths, the houses are comparatively small and rude, the churches are barn-like in appearance, the school-houses are cruder still, the dress of the people is odd if not uncomely, their speech full of quaint turns and pronunciations, their method of living devoid of many things which we deem essential. Possibly as strange as anything to us would be the prevalence of house-

hold devotion and the religiousness everywhere manifest. It is a different world from that with which we are familiar to-day. Charles I is on the throne and is acknowledged sovereign, but is now within a few months of his beheading. Long after that dire event he will here be counted king, as tidings of his "taking off" will fail to reach the secluded community. In fact, intercourse with the settlements on the Bay and even those upon the river is infrequent.

At this time there were still many who doubted whether Ptolemy or Copernicus had the right of it as respected the organization of the physical universe. It was twelve years before Newton, sitting in his garden and observing the fall of an apple, had been led to the train of thought which brought him to the great law of gravitation. It was twenty-four years before that same genius unbraided the ray of light and solved the beautiful mystery of the rainbow. It was twenty-five years before the first almanac was published in England; sixty-one years before the first daily paper was issued in London; eighty-five years before Dufay made possible the science of electricity as it now exists; one hundred and twelve years before there was a street light in London: one hundred and thirty-one years before the steam engine, in the form now used, was devised; a hundred and seventy-one years before the first steamship crossed the ocean; a hundred and eighty-one years before Stephenson's locomotive led forth the great procession of engines that have hurried their trains across continents; a hundred and ninety-two years before the first letter was prepaid by stamp; a hundred and ninety-two years

before the telegraph sent its message on lightning wings; two hundred and six before England's monarch telegraphed under the ocean waves, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth Peace;" two hundred and twenty-five years before the telephone conveyed not only the thought but the accent of humanity; two hundred and twenty-six before the phonograph began to treasure the voices of the absent and the departed; at least two centuries and a quarter before the trolley cars began their beneficent service.

Shakespeare had been in his grave but thirty-two years; "Paradise Lost" was not yet written for nineteen years; the most of the great writers and musical composers and orators and philosophers with whose works we are familiar, had not yet come upon the stage. Modern science with its amazing revelation of the thoughts of God had scarcely begun to brighten the dark horizons of the past. The great hypothesis of evolution, which has revolutionized so much of our thinking in every department, material, intellectual, social, political, religious, had not then been dreamed of. Such an event as this "Connecticut building" reminds us of, the World's Exposition of 1893, with its display of the works of all the nations, its parliament of religions and varied attractions, was of course, as far beyond the conception of the founders as a conference of the planets would be beyond ours.

These facts hint to us in a kind of negative way of what must have been the limitations under which our fathers lived two and a half centuries ago. Thinking of these, we wonder that they thought as nobly

and acted as grandly and built themselves up as symmetrically and to as imposing a stature as they did. They themselves were of course greater than any of the appliances of which we make so much to-day.

Yet, we must be impressed as we look back with the progress that has been made since their time. This is manifold and immeasurable. The old heavens and earth have passed away and all things have become new. As I have already stated, the commonwealth upon whose beginnings they toiled, has expanded into the splendid empire of the people that dominate this Western Continent. Our flag, the banner whose first shadowy fabric they began to weave, wherever it floats means enlightenment, just government, Christian civilization. In some true sense it stands, as we trust, for that Kingdom of God to whose establishment they aspired and of whose dominance upon these shores they dreamed.

And what of the future? Shall we go backward? I have spoken of a picture of this region as it was two hundred and fifty years ago to-day. If we find it difficult to imagine the scene that then presented itself, how much more difficult is it to portray to our mental vision that which shall here be witnessed two hundred and fifty years to come. What would we not give for a glimpse of the original New Haven Colony as it shall appear on the 6th of August, A. D. 2148. The progress made in the past is all that can afford us any hint of that which is to be. It seems to us impossible that the same advance can be made in the coming two and a half centuries that the last

have shown. And yet is there any good reason known to us why there should not be? We can have no doubt that such a picture of the future as I have suggested, would contain elements as much beyond our comprehension as the telephone and the telegraph, the electric car and the steam engine would surpass the understanding of Governor Eaton and Parson Pierson. Such mastery of the forces of nature as has never occurred to us; such applications of them to the accomplishment of matters as yet undreamed of; methods of communication and of transportation which cause those of to-day to seem bungling and tardy; these would no doubt appear in the sketch of which I have hinted. Industry and enterprise will be more fruitful than in the past; literature and art will find nobler development; the faith of the fathers, modified indeed, made simpler and truer, will still inspire; the ideal and the spiritual will become more dominant as the world grows older and the centuries ripen toward the golden age.

As to our life and career as a nation, I am most hopeful. That which has already been wrought gives good augury for the future. Through the effort of Founders and Patriots and their successors, patriots all we trust, an unprecedented measure of strength and freedom has by us been secured. This republic of the west has amazed the world. Such a strong and prosperous nation is an end in itself. And yet there are other ends that it must subserve if it is to attain its highest estate. It must live not unto itself alone, but in giving to others find its own supreme greatness.

The events of this good year, 1898, show us that the United States is recognizing the fact of its obligation to others. A new idea of its mission has thrilled it, and, after a manner unknown to history, it has gone forth to relieve the oppressed and to emancipate the enslaved. This, without stopping to count the cost in blood and treasure. And never was our banner more lustrous than when leading a battalion or a fleet to victory in such a cause, never will our nation prove itself more worthy of its origin than when throwing over those who have been cast down and destroyed the beneficent protection of its august sovereignty.

I incline to the opinion that as a people we have but just begun the work of philanthropy that has been assigned to us. We awake to find ourselves one of the first naval powers in the world. We learn that in an incredibly brief time we can summon an army from the various departments of peaceful effort that is invincible. We are thus capable of exerting a force such as not only gives us dignity, but ensures us the respect of the nations, ever wont as they are to honor the power that can control land and sea. That force is the intelligent might which our institutions have developed. And it is not to be used for selfish ends. It will devote itself to no projects of mere conquest; it will never stop to oppress the weak nor to wrong the powerful. Back of it is the spirit of this nation, just, humane, liberty-loving, Christian. It will never exert itself in defiance of that conscience which, as a people, we have inherited from the fathers.

But who can say what, through the fullness of our consecrated strength, we may not accomplish in the interest of freedom and righteousness? We have no right, as it seems to me, to shut ourselves in behind barriers that subserved their purpose years ago. A providential intimation may be more imperative than a traditional usage. If we are called to take our place in the midst of the great family of nations, the representative of the highest ideas of government, the exponent of liberty under law, the champion of the weak, the defender and ally of the oppressed in all the earth, I know not why we should refuse the responsibility and the honor. It may be that we have come to the kingdom for a time like this, when the wrongs of men are being righted and more and more fully the people are entering into the enjoyment of their God-given heritage. It may be that we are to be favored as never nation before us has been in being made the means of light and liberty to the masses that groan and perish. One day is as a thousand years with the Sovereignty that controls the destiny of the nations. And it may be that the sublime faith and devotion of the fathers are to find their outcome and reward in the worldwide work of enlightenment and of emancipation entrusted to their descendants. I feel that unless we go back to the very foundations and touch the pulses of the earliest generations upon these shores and trace the political development that began in their purpose and endeavor, we can have no adequate idea of that which has been accomplished, and no basis from which to forecast the future.

Evidently their work was grander than it has sometimes been considered; grander than they themselves knew. They were faithful to duty as they saw it, and because faithful, honored as the medium through which political life and priceless benediction should come to this continent and to all the world. Their immortality is sure and glorious.

Founders and Fathers; through the mists of time
We gaze upon your character sublime.

We mark your faith that caught the vision clear,
Your hope that knew no shadowing touch of fear.

We see how firm your purpose and how true,
Ideal, unworldly, understood by few.

We note your work, so humble and obscure,
Yet wrought for God and destined to endure.

You knew it not, but in your project lay
The dawning of a new and nobler day.

And years and ages, freedom-blessed, should tell
How faithfully you labored and how well.

You waked to life a nation strong and grand
And sent it forth to counsel and command.

You gave us heroes, statesmen, men of might,
And souls ensteeped in sweetness and in light.

You gave us art and science, law and love,
The joys of earth and hope of heaven above.

We give you praise and honor, reverence true,
But never all the praise that is your due.

Like you, may we be faithful to our trust,
And thus exalt you while you sleep in dust.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF THE ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA

No. 3

STEPHEN DECATUR

AND THE SUPPRESSION OF PIRACY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

BY

CHARLES HENRY SMITH, LL.D.

NEW HAVEN, CONN., A.D. 1901

OFFICERS OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY

1900–1901

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THOMAS JEFFERSON BOARDMAN, ... *Hartford*
MAJOR GEORGE WHITE TUCKER, ... *Waterbury*
HON. THEODORE SEDGWICK GOLD, . . *West Cornwall*

(*Two Years.*)

JOHN DWIGHT PARKER, ... *Hartford*
COL. CHARLES ALEXANDER JEWELL, . . . *Hartford*
ELI MIX, ... *New Haven*

(*One Year.*)

GEORGE FRANKLIN NEWCOMB, ... *New Haven*
WILLIAM NEWTON PARKER, ... *New Haven*
HON. JAMES DUDLEY DEWELL, ... *New Haven*

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STEPHEN DECATUR

AND THE SUPPRESSION OF PIRACY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

AN ADDRESS AT A MEETING OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF THE ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA, APRIL 19, A.D. 1900 . . . . .

BY

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STEPHEN DECATUR

AND THE SUPPRESSION OF PIRACY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

The recent achievement of Admiral Dewey which has so greatly enhanced the prestige of the United States in the Pacific, furnishes a suitable occasion for recalling the equally important similar service rendered by Commodore Decatur in the Mediterranean in the early part of the century. When we consider their work, and its effect upon the standing of the United States in distant parts of the world, there are certain resemblances in the careers of these two men which attract attention. All our naval conflicts have been in American or European waters, with the exception of those in which Decatur and Dewey gained distinction. One of these was in African, the other in Asiatic waters. Both of these conflicts had connected with them certain operations on land which involved political questions of a serious nature, and violent differences of opinion as to the right and proper course for our government to pursue. As a result of both, the importance of the United States was greatly increased in the eyes of those who had held us before in light esteem. It is not my intention to trace very closely these resemblances. Let it suffice to mention them, and then, with the added interest of mental comparison with recent events, let us trace in part the career of a true man who in an

earlier period served his country well. As we proceed, we can hardly fail to note the contrast between the United States of 1800, cringing before the pirates of the Mediterranean, and the United States of 1900, an acknowledged master power in the world.

On the northern coast of Africa, there appeared toward the close of the Middle Ages the four Barbarian States of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, which were ruled for the most part by chieftains of a singularly ferocious temper. Of one of these it is related that he prided himself on an accomplishment in which practice had given him great skill. It consisted in leaping onto his horse, and at the same instant, with a single blow of his scimitar, cutting off the head of the groom who was holding the bridle. There was nothing malicious in this. It was simply an eccentric way of releasing the horse for the ride. Under such rulers, piracy was adopted as a State institution, and regarded as a legitimate source of revenue. Said the Dey of Algiers on one occasion, "If I were to make peace with every nation, what should I do with my corsairs? My soldiers cannot live on their miserable allowance."

During more than three centuries, the pirate ships of the Barbary powers were the scourge of the Mediterranean, where they sometimes cruised in fleets of seventy or eighty sail, defying the strongest European navies of the time. Not content with booty secured at sea, they would swoop down on the coast villages of Southern Europe and carry off the inhabitants into

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slavery. In the sixteenth century, the Emperor Charles Fifth made a descent upon Tunis in the interest of humanity, and succeeded in rescuing twenty-two thousand European captives. The nations that suffered most from the pirates were prevented by various rivalries and jealousies from combining to suppress them, and, being unable to cope with them singly, they fell into the habit of paying tribute, and thus purchasing immunity. Among these nations was England.

In the eighteenth century, when England had become a great naval power, she was well able to suppress piracy, but refrained from doing so for a very selfish reason, as appears from the following utterance of Lord Sheffield in Parliament in 1784. He said: "That the Barbary States are advantageous to maritime powers is certain. If they are suppressed, the little states of Italy would have much more of the carrying trade"—a remark which is quite on a level with that made by the Dey of Algiers. This view seems to have had some support in public opinion, for Franklin tells us of London merchants who said that "if there were no Algiers, it would be worth England's while to build one up." As the rulers of the North African States were really afraid of England, they accepted moderate tribute from her, which was paid to keep up appearances. They of course recouped themselves by exacting relatively larger tribute from, or plundering the ships of, the smaller States, who were thus placed at a disadvantage in competing with England for the carrying trade of the Mediterranean, and later of the Atlantic as well; for in the eighteenth

century the Algerian xebecs appeared as far west as the Barbadoes.

By an arrangement between England and the pirates, English merchant ships were furnished by the British government with certificates, or passports, which ensured protection. As long as we were British Colonies, our merchant ships were given these passports when they traded in waters infested by the pirates. But after 1776, we were of course no longer entitled to them. Our merchants however were often able to purchase them, and when they could not do that, they could resort to counterfeiting. This was not a very difficult matter, for the value of a passport lay mainly in its size and shape, and the curved lines in the ornamental border which the printer had put on its margin. The pirates knew nothing of English writing, so when one of them boarded a ship and the passport was produced, he would measure it to see if it was the right size, then, taking from the folds of his robe a notched stick, would apply it to the margin to see if the curved lines corresponded in position to the notches. But the pirates could not be fooled in this way very long. They soon learned that a new nation had appeared in the world, which had no navy, and which was therefore their legitimate prey.

Before the Revolutionary War, about one-sixth of the wheat and flour exported from this country, and about one-fourth in value of the dried and pickled fish, and some rice, were taken to the countries bordering the Mediterranean. This trade employed about one thousand ships and twelve thousand men. When

this commerce lost its British protection owing to the declaration of independence, our people tried to put it under the protection of the French. An attempt was made to insert in our first treaty with France a clause whereby that government would pledge itself to protect our commerce from the Barbary pirates. But, naturally enough, the French King, who was more anxious to hurt England than to help us, declined to incur such an obligation, and promised instead "his good offices" to induce the pirates to let our ships alone. It is needless to say that good offices, unaccompanied with cash or gunpowder, amounted to very little. Our ships were plundered, and their crews were sold into slavery or held for ransom. Now an American sailor in those days was quite likely to be a son or other near relative of a respected citizen and church-member in Boston, Salem, or Newburyport, and the news that he was a slave in Africa called for general sympathy and efforts to secure his release. The sums demanded for ransom were large, as will be seen from a bill sent to Mr. Jefferson in Paris in 1786:

For three captains,	$6,000 each	.....	$18,000
two mates,	4,000 "	.....	8,000
two passengers,	4,000 "	.....	8,000
fourteen seamen,	1,400 "	.....	19,600
Sum		.....	$53,600

Add to this a customary bonus of eleven per cent., and we have a total of $59,496 for twenty-one persons.

Parton in his life of Jefferson well asks, what must have been the feelings of a Newburyport family in average circumstances on learning that the release of

a father, husband, brother, or son, from cruel slavery depended on their raising 6,000 hard dollars, and he humorously adds that even to a whole congregation "accustomed to codfish on Saturday, baked beans on Sunday, and a best coat worn for twenty years," the sum was by no means a small one. Yet the congregations did come to the rescue, and during a series of years, even while Washington was President, we are told that it was not an uncommon occurrence for the pastor in a New England sea-board town to read a letter from some fellow-townsman, describing his sufferings under a Mohammedan task-master; the reading of the letter being followed by a collection for his relief. On Thanksgiving Day of 1793, it is said that a collection was taken up in every church in New England to ransom the ships' companies of ten American vessels which had recently been captured by the Barbary corsairs. Nor were sailors the only victims. Any one taking passage for Europe in an American ship, in those days, had to count capture by the pirates as one of the risks of the voyage. At one time a rumor was current in Europe that Dr. Franklin while at sea had been captured and carried as a slave to Algiers, and there was nothing improbable in the report. At an earlier time, Jacob Leisler, afterward Governor of New York, was for four years a slave in Morocco. When Jefferson was our Minister in France, and wished his young daughter to come over and join him, he considered passage in an American ship too hazardous, and directed to have her brought over in "a French or English vessel having a Mediterranean pass."

The outrage of 1793 aroused our government to the necessity of protecting its own citizens, and Congress in 1794 authorized the construction of six frigates. The keels of these were soon laid, and in course of time they were launched, the first ships of the Old Navy. One of them was the famous Constitution, which still survives in honorable retirement in Boston harbor, a precious relic of earlier days, when our forty-fours won recognition as the most effective fighting ships, and our gunners as the most accurate marksmen on the sea. But it was not in the service for which they were intended that the Constitution, the President, the United States, the Chesapeake, the Constellation, and the Congress, won their renown. The preparations for a manly defence of our rights were suddenly suspended, and a humiliating peace was made with Algiers, by which the United States became tributary to that despicable power. This step was one in a course which lasted for ten years, as singular as any in our diplomatic history, by which we flattered and fawned on the barbarous rulers of the North African States, paying them annual tribute, making them costly presents, dickering about the ransom to be paid for our enslaved citizens, and in the end spending more money than it would have taken to put a sufficient force on the water, and with it secure our rights at the cannon's mouth. One who believes in a strong navy as the natural protector of ocean commerce, and the appropriate visible token in foreign ports of a great nation which is worthy of respect, may be pardoned for looking upon our experience during those ten years as the legitimate fruit

and logical outcome of an ultra peace-loving spirit which refuses to recognize the necessary part assigned to force in the ordering of the world. The success which attended a reversal of our policy a few years later shows what might have been accomplished by adhering to the original plan of resistance. But fairness requires it to be said that at that time the United States was not alone in making humiliating concessions to those impudent rascals who seem to have cast a spell over the civilized world. An envoy from Tripoli to England in 1786 refused to transact his business through the Foreign Office of the British Government, and insisted on communicating directly with the King, and his demand was granted. The King afterward remarked that "all the fellow seemed to want was some money." When a European man-of-war saluted a pirate flag, the corsairs, after returning the salute, were in the habit of demanding and receiving a barrel of powder for each gun they had fired. The first spirited protest against this practice appears to have been made by General Eaton of Connecticut, who was our consul at Tunis. While refusing to give the powder, he politely affected to regard the matter as too insignificant for a great and sovereign prince to notice. "However trifling it may appear to you," replied the Bey, "to me it is important. Fifteen barrels of powder will furnish a cruiser, which may capture a prize, and net me a hundred thousand dollars."

The action of Congress in 1794 for starting the building of a navy was wholly spasmodic. The real policy of the United States from the first had been, and still was, one of paying for the privilege of being

let alone. The very Act for the construction of a navy contained a clause that if the negotiations then commenced for purchasing peace were successful, the work on the ships should cease. In the dominant party at that time, there was a strong feeling of hostility to the navy. Said one Congressman from South Carolina, "I would go much further to see a frigate burned than to see one launched."

In 1786 Jefferson went from Paris to London to meet the Tripolitan Embassador, and found that a treaty with Tripoli alone would cost $150,000, with an addition of $15,000 for the Embassador's private purse. In 1787 Congress appropriated $20,000 for the Emperor of Morocco as an inducement for that monarch to recognize and continue the treaty made only a few months before with his predecessor, and our agent was authorized to go $5,000 higher if necessary. The Emperor wrote to President Washington, "We have received the present at the consul's hand with satisfaction . . . . . continue writing letters to us . . . . . We are at peace with you in the same manner that you were with our father, who is now in glory." His father, the late Emperor, just before he went to glory, had demanded and received from our government 100 cannon as a bonus, preliminary to making the treaty with us. In 1792 President Washington asked the Senate if a treaty would be approved, paying $40,000 for the ransom of thirteen Americans, and $25,000 annually for perpetual peace between Algiers and the United States. The Senate said yes, but the Dey of Algiers, with a truer estimate of the value of his friendship, refused to accept these terms.

In 1795, Mr. Donaldson, an agent of our government, went to Algiers and apparently gave the Dey *carte blanche* to name his own terms. A good round sum was to be paid for the liberation of one hundred and twenty American captives, and a regular annual tribute was to be paid thereafter as the price of continued peace between the two countries. Presents of various kinds were to be made, mostly naval stores for use on the pirate ships—spars, cordage and cables, pitch and tar, guns, powder and shot. So large and costly were these presents, and so short was the time allowed for making them, that Donaldson had to ask twice for extension of time. A third time he went with the same request, whereupon the Dey fixed a limit of thirty days, beyond which he would set his cruisers loose upon American commerce. Then Donaldson promised him as an extra bonus the best frigate that American shipbuilders could build for him. This pleased the Dey, and he granted as much time as was needed. All these agreements were approved by Congress, even to the building of a frigate as a special peace offering to propitiate the offended ruler. This ship, laden with naval stores of various kinds to the value of $100,000, and with twenty-six barrels full of silver dollars as a part of her cargo, sailed from Portsmouth on the 20th of January, 1798. A local publication said, "On Thursday morning about sunrise, a gun was discharged from the frigate Crescent as a signal for getting under way, and at 10 A. M. she cleared the harbor with a fine leading breeze. Our best wishes follow Captain Newman, his officers and men. May they arrive at their place of destination,

and present to the Dey of Algiers one of the finest specimens of naval architecture which was ever borne on the Pisquataqua's waters. The Crescent is a present from the United States to the Dey as a compensation for delay in not fulfilling our treaty stipulations in proper time." Thus complacently did our people regard the direct contribution of a thirty-six-gun frigate from our government to the pirate fleet of the Mediterranean, with a tacit apology for delay, and the knowledge that the ship might be used almost any day against us. Could loss of national self-respect be more complete!

The Secretary of the Treasury footed up the sums called for by Donaldson's agreements, and found that they amounted to $992,463.25. Nearly a million of money to a pirate chief from an American Congress that begrudged the cost of a navy! In the few years following, this sum was more than doubled in payments made to the other Mediterranean rovers, and after all we found that we needed a navy to bring them to terms. So much for a policy of peace at any price.

The formal treaty of 1795, between the United States and Algiers, contains some curious items. American merchant ships were to be furnished with passports from our government. They might at any time be stopped on the high seas by an Algerian cruiser, and boarded, with a demand that the passport by produced. When an American man-of-war was at anchor in any port of Algiers, if any slaves sought refuge on board, they must be given up on demand, and the treaty adds, "No excuse shall be made that

they have hid themselves amongst the people and cannot be found, or any other equivocation." We are accustomed to think of slaves as Africans. But the slaves here referred to were Europeans, and might even be Americans, for another clause in the treaty provides that an American caught by a pirate on an enemy's ship without a passport should be considered lawful prize—in other words, a slave. The treaty naïvely adds, "This regency knows its friends by their passports."

Another interesting provision was that disputes or suits at law between Algerian subjects and citizens of the United States should be "decided by the Dey in person, and none other." William Eaton has given us a repulsive and perhaps over-wrought picture of this man who was thus made the sole arbiter of controversies between his own subjects and Americans. He called upon him with other officials on a State occasion, and says he found him in a small dimly lighted room, the narrow windows of which were protected by iron bars; and he calls him a huge shaggy beast, seated like a bear on his hind legs, and grinning but saying little. It is safe to say that the treatment accorded to an American suitor by this barbaric chief would depend very much upon whether the American tribute had been promptly paid, or was in arrears. Eaton's letter, by the way, shows incidentally how artificial and arbitrary conventional ideas of decency are. He was obliged to conform to a well known and widespread Oriental custom and take off his shoes before he entered the Dey's presence. He refers indignantly to this as "an offence against com-

mon decency," whereas to the natives of the country it would have seemed indecent if he had kept his shoes on.

Perhaps the most remarkable provision in this treaty was the following: "Should any citizen of the United States of North America kill, wound or strike, a subject of this regency, he shall be punished in the same manner as a Turk, and not with more severity." The inhabitants of North Africa were quite commonly spoken of as "Turks," and if the word was used in the popular sense, it would mean any subject of the Dey. On the other hand, Algiers was nominally a dependency of the Turkish Empire, and it may be that Turks had some immunities and privileges, which would account for the singular phraseology. But when allowance is made, the methods of administering so-called justice in those lands are so different from our own, and their customary punishments are so inhuman, that it must remain a matter of wonder that Washington and the Senate were willing to put Americans in jeopardy of life and limb on a level with Turks. Even to the present day, European and American governments refuse to permit their own subjects to be tried by native officials or native law, in Turkey, Persia, China, and other portions of the Eastern world, and it is only quite recently that this concession has been made to Japan in recognition of her apparently advanced civilization.

Such was the arrangement for ransom, and such was the treaty which President Washington announced to Congress in his annual message of 1795, to use his own words, "with peculiar satisfaction," and which

he referred to again a year later as one from which might be expected "a solid peace, and a perfect security from predatory warfare." A significant commentary on this peace with pirates obtained by purchase, and a merited judgment on Washington's approval of it, occurred in 1800, when the national ship George Washington, one of the two survivors of the Revolutionary navy, went to Algiers under Captain Bainbridge to carry the annual tribute. When his errand was accomplished, Captain Bainbridge was ordered by the Dey to go on an errand for him to Constantinople. The Captain of course refused to take orders from the Dey, whereupon the latter replied, "You pay me tribute, by which you become my slaves; I have therefore a right to order you as I may think proper." The logic of this answer, and the guns of the fort which commanded the frigate, were alike irresistible, and the George Washington went off on the Dey's errand with the flag of Algiers at her main-mast head in token of submission.

That the Dey should regard those who paid him tribute as his inferiors was inevitable. The same impression was made upon the other North-African rulers, and they grew more peevish and exacting in their demands. It was impossible to satisfy them. They jealously watched the presents distributed by our government, and if any one was given more than another, the rest became clamorous and threatening. The present of the Crescent to Algiers especially provoked the cupidity of the others. The Bashaw of Tripoli sent word to President Adams that he was pleased with his professions of friendship, but would

be more disposed to believe them if they had been accompanied with the present of a frigate, and he advised him to respond promptly, "as a delay on your part cannot but be prejudicial to your interests." The Bey of Tunis, the smallest of these ignoble States, complained because some of the planks and oars sent by our government were too short. In a letter to President Jefferson in April 1801, he demanded forty cannon as a token of friendship. A little later, an accidental fire having destroyed his armory with 50,000 stand of arms, he notified the "tributary nations," as he called them, meaning the United States and the maritime powers of Europe, that they would be expected to make good the loss. The requisition on our government was 10,000 muskets.

The muskets were not given, for President Jefferson had, as we say, his back up. But President Adams, in 1798, instructed our agent at Tunis, that if the Bey would moderate some of his demands, he might offer him a twenty-two-gun cruiser in lieu of certain stores that had been promised—the cruiser "either to be built for the purpose, or one already belonging to the United States." So our government was actually willing to lower the flag on a ship of our brave little navy, and have it turned into a pirate! The Bey declined the offer because one was not enough. He wanted two! In the course of a few years we wasted on these insatiable marauders enough to have built and equipped a dozen frigates, with which we could have applied to them the only form of persuasion which they were capable of respecting.

There was one man who understood this. Jeffer-

son, while abroad, had made a careful study of the matter, and had arrived at the conclusion that the only way to deal with the pirates was to thrash them. In 1801 he became President, and then had the opportunity to put his views in practice. One of the early acts of his administration was the sending of a small fleet of observation to the Mediterranean, with orders not to open war, but to accept it as soon as it became necessary to act on the defensive. He thus shrewdly put the fleet in a position to accomplish just what he wanted, yet kept within the Constitutional limit, which gives to Congress alone the power to declare war. Soon we were involved in a war which was declared by Tripoli, and which dribbled along for four years.

The first encounter was a brush between the Enterprise and the pirate ship Tripoli, in which the latter was roughly handled and captured. According to instructions, the ship was not kept as a prize, but was dismantled, and with just sail enough to make headway, was sent to her port in the hands of her surviving crew. These men were not slow in spreading abroad highly imaginative reports of the super-human strength and ferocious aspect of the new comers from the West, and the pirates became exceedingly careful all along the coast. Our ships, four in number, appeared off and on at the principal ports, did some blockading, chased an occasional pirate, and convoyed American ships; but they drew too much water for the most effective service, so that in 1803 four additional ships of lighter draft were sent to the Mediterranean. These, with the frigates already there, and

the Constitution which arrived a little later, and nine gun-boats, made quite an imposing fleet.

These gun-boats, by the way, were none other than some of Jefferson's little pets, of which about two hundred were constructed while he was President. The Federalists poked much fun at them, because it was a part of Jefferson's plan to have them hauled on land when not in use, and housed in sheds for protection from the weather. Ten of them started to cross the ocean, each with its one gun stowed in the hold, for if it were left in position on deck, the boat would be top heavy and in danger of capsizing in a storm. One was never heard from again, and doubtless foundered at sea. One was sighted by the Captain of a British man-of-war who, seeing a spread of sail and no hull, supposed it was a raft with shipwrecked persons on board. So he bore down and offered assistance, to the no small mortification of the officer in command, who had to admit that his diminutive craft was part of the United States navy.

Among the ships sent to the Mediterranean in 1803 was the brig Argus in command of Lieutenant Decatur. He had already been there twice before. In 1801 he went as First Lieutenant of the Essex, Captain Bainbridge, and in the following year, as First Lieutenant of the New York, Captain Barron. The drilling and consequent efficiency of the crew of a man-of-war depended largely on the First Lieutenant, so that his position was one of great importance. Much depended upon the personal qualities of this officer, who might make his men either enthusiastic or sullen according to the way he treated them.

Concerning Decatur as First Lieutenant, his biographer tells us that "he possessed in an eminent degree the happy art of governing sailors by their affections rather than by their fears. He was averse to punishment, and rarely resorted to it, being usually able to rely for the preservation of discipline on the reluctance of his inferiors to displease him. It was remarked of him at this period by an officer that "he seemed, as if by magic, to hold a boundless sway over the hearts of seamen at first sight, and that such a conquest could only have been gained by a just regard for their rights, a watchful care for their comfort, and a sympathy for their feelings."

The fleet which Decatur joined with the Argus in 1803 was under command of Commodore Preble, an energetic officer, who had orders to push the war, now fully declared on both sides between Tripoli and the United States. One of the largest ships of the fleet was the Philadelphia of forty-four guns. This fine frigate was one of the fruits of the great patriotic uprising of our people against the French in 1798, when the watchword was, "Millions for defense, not a cent for tribute." (Pity it is that this sentiment was not adopted earlier and applied against the pirates of the Mediterranean.) Money was eagerly subscribed in the towns on the Atlantic coast, for the construction of a navy. The largest sea-board towns, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, contributed each a frigate, named after the town that gave it. When Philadelphia made her gift, it was accompanied with a request that Stephen Decatur the elder, father of the subject of this sketch, might be placed in com-

mand, and this was done. In 1803 she was on duty off the coast of Tripoli under Captain Bainbridge. On October 31 of that year, while chasing a pirate, she was lured inside of a sunken reef which was not down on the chart. Warned by continual sounding that the water was shoaling, she turned to the open sea, in which direction the deepest water would naturally be expected, but the next moment her bow shot five or six feet out of the water, and she was fast on the reef. Anchors and guns were thrown overboard, and everything possible was done to float her, but without avail.

Meanwhile, the xebec which she had been chasing carried the news to Tripoli near by, and soon the pirates were swarming around the ship. As the Philadelphia had been cruising alone, no relief was possible, and resistance was useless. So Captain Bainbridge and his men, three hundred and fifteen in all, surrendered. In this company were several officers who became famous in the war with England ten years later. The First Lieutenant was David Porter, well known for his achievements in the Pacific with the Essex. The Second Lieutenant was Jacob Jones, who commanded the Wasp in the fight with the Frolic. Others were Daniel Tod Patterson, who commanded our naval forces at the battle of New Orleans in 1815; James Biddle, commander of the Hornet in her fight with the Penguin; and James Renshaw, afterward commander of the Enterprise. The prisoners were for the most part well treated, for the Bashaw of Tripoli was put in excellent humor by the greatness of his windfall, which included the

prospect of large sums of money as ransom. The Philadelphia in a few days was dragged off the rocks, the cannon were fished out of the water, and a first class frigate, needing only moderate repairs, was added to the Tripolitan navy.

This untoward event was of course a great blow to us, for the Philadelphia, considering her size and armament, constituted a very important part of our force in the Mediterranean at the time of the accident. Worse than the direct loss was the prospect that she would add great strength to the Bashaw's navy, and would soon be used against us. To prevent this, if possible, was now the duty of Commodore Preble. Partly, as it would appear, of his own motion or that of Decatur, partly at a suggestion from Bainbridge in a letter written from his prison with lemon juice, a plan was matured for destroying the Philadelphia. For the execution of this plan, the choice fell on Decatur. His bravery, coolness, and skill, admirably fitted him for the service, and he felt besides a keen personal interest in preventing a pirate flag from floating over the ship which his father had been the first to command.

A small ketch of sixty tons had recently been captured from the enemy. On account of its familiar shape and rig, it could enter the harbor of Tripoli without awakening suspicion, and so was selected for use in an attempt to reach the Philadelphia and set her on fire. The next thing was to organize an expedition, and here the only difficulty was in making selections from the large number of brave men who were eager to go. When Decatur called for volunteers

on his own ship, every man on board stepped forward. Seventy-five men were chosen, and among them, as junior officers and midshipmen, were several who followed up their gallantry on this occasion by distinguished service in the subsequent war with England. One of them was James Lawrence, who in 1813 commanded the Hornet when she sank the Peacock in fifteen minutes, and who was afterward given the Chesapeake and died while fighting her against the Shannon, his last words being the famous watchword used so effectively by Perry at the battle of Lake Erie, "Don't give up the ship." Another was James MacDonough, who in 1814 won the battle of Lake Champlain, and so prevented the threatened invasion of New York from Canada. A third was Charles Morris, who served with distinction at the capture of the Guerriere, was soon after placed in command of the John Adams, and in 1825 was honored with the command of the Brandywine, which took Lafayette, the nation's guest, back to France.

The plans and preparations for Decatur's hazardous enterprize were made with the greatest care and accurate foresight, as was shown by their complete success. The little ketch, now named the Intrepid, with the company of seventy-five picked men on board, entered the harbor of Tripoli on the night of February 16, 1804, and, favored by the darkness and by the very boldness of the undertaking, which was enough to disarm suspicion, reached the side of the Philadelphia. Then the alarm of "Americanos" was raised, and at the same instant Decatur sprang on board, followed by his company. The Philadelphia was fully

manned by Tripolitans, and these came rushing up on deck from below. But nothing could resist the impetuosity of Decatur's attack, and in ten minutes he had swept the enemy off into the water, and was in complete control of the ship. The full hazard of the enterprize was now to appear. The Tripolitans, well on their guard against attack, had moved the Philadelphia within range of the castle and of a dozen batteries, mounting in all one hundred and fifteen guns of large calibre. They had also placed near her twenty-four armed ships of various sizes, fully manned, and ready for work at a moment's notice. The noise of the conflict on the Philadelphia had of course given the alarm, so that not a moment was to be lost. Quickly the men sprang to the different parts of the ship which they had been detailed to set on fire, and so thoroughly and rapidly was the work done, that some of the firing parties had barely time to reach the deck before being overtaken by flame and smoke. All was done with coolness and precision, even to the rescuing of a wounded pirate who could not escape unaided from the flames. Back on the Intrepid, it remained to get her out—a very different matter from getting her in. The burning ship lighted up the whole scene, and the retreating boat received the concentrated fire of the batteries and the ships. Slowly making her way out, she escaped as if by miracle, and when out of range, Decatur mustered his men and found that not one was lost, and only one was slightly wounded. This brings to mind the equally wonderful escape of Dewey's men in Manila Bay. In other features of the enterprize, its desperate nature, and

the daring required to carry it through, we are strikingly reminded of Hobson at Santiago. The Philadelphia burned to the water's edge and sank. Decatur's exploit was appreciated and admired throughout Europe. Nelson is said to have pronounced it "the most bold and daring act of the age." At home the news was received with enthusiasm. Congress voted him a sword, and he was promoted to a Captaincy, his commission bearing date on the day of his memorable achievement. In 1844 the Cumberland, which was afterwards destroyed by the Merrimac in the Civil War, visited Tripoli, and her captain had some pieces of the Philadelphia's timbers brought up to be made into souvenirs.

Decatur's next exploit was one which exhibited mainly his personal bravery. On the third of August, 1804, Commodore Preble bombarded Tripoli from his ships, and engaged the enemy's fleet which came out in defence of the city. In the course of the fight, James Decatur, brother of Stephen, was treacherously killed by the Captain of a Tripolitan ship after the latter had surrendered. Immediately on hearing of this, Lieutenant Decatur pursued the Tripolitan, boarded her with only ten American companions (one of whom was Macdonough), oblivious to every consideration except that of avenging his brother's death. Soon he was in mortal hand-to-hand conflict with the Tripolitan Captain, who was a much larger man than himself. Others rushed to the help of the combatants, and in the course of the mêlée, a blow was aimed at Decatur which must have proved fatal, had it not been for the devotion of a seaman,

Reuben James. He had been disabled in both his arms, but without a moment's hesitation he interposed his head to save the life of his beloved commander. James's skull proved to be thick, and the blow, falling short of its mark, probably lost some of its force. It was not fatal, but James carried a deep scar on his head through life. When Decatur in his gratitude offered him any reward or any position it was possible to bestow, he merely asked to be relieved from the duty of handing the hammocks down to the men when they were piped below, as that was a service he did not relish. James's act was an exceptional one, few like it being on record. A parallel case is that of John Sykes, who, at Cadiz, interposed his head to receive the blow of a sabre which was aimed at Nelson. Reuben James was for many years a well known character in the navy. He followed Decatur from ship to ship, and was with him in nearly all his battles. He belonged to the Old Navy in more ways than one. Once, when undergoing an operation, he was apparently sinking and in need of a stimulant. The surgeon asked him whether he preferred brown-stout or brandy-flip. "I'll take both, sir," he replied feebly. Perhaps the doctor gave him both, for he lived for several years after that.

To return to the fight on the Tripolitan cruiser, Decatur won the day, and his brother's murderer paid the penalty of his treachery with his life. The story of this desperate struggle made a great impression at home. For a number of years after, a popular print in shop windows in different parts of the country represented Decatur and his gigantic adversary

grappling in mortal combat. It appealed strongly to the small boy of the period, and was very likely responsible for a good many cases of running away to sea.

We now approach the close of the war. This brought with it a remarkable episode in which the principal figure was a Connecticut man, and a relative of the family which has given two well known Professors to Yale. General William Eaton was a native of Woodstock, Connecticut, and served in the Revolutionary army. In 1799 he went to Tunis as American Consul, and was quite successful in his dealings with the capricious rulers of that petty State. He was a man of great energy, fruitful in resources, and thoroughly understood the character and policy of the pirate States. His letters to the State Department are said to contain much valuable information, with many amusing incidents dryly narrated. He stated more than once with much energy his opinion that the best way to protect our commerce was to make the pirates afraid of us, and his representations may have contributed to the change of front of our government when Jefferson became President.

In Tunis, General Eaton met a brother of the Bashaw of Tripoli. This man was a claimant to the throne of Tripoli, with a better right to it than the reigning Bashaw. Eaton conceived the idea of helping him to recover his rights, with the expectation that in case of success he would, as ruler of Tripoli, be bound by firm ties of gratitude to the United States. This plan once formed in his mind, he pursued it with tireless energy.

Finding it necessary to communicate personally with his government, he returned to the United States, landing at Boston May 5, 1803.

While in Washington he laid before the President his scheme for aiding the Bashaw's rival. Eaton was thoroughly loyal to his protégé, and thought of nothing less than seating him on the throne of Tripoli. Jefferson probably regarded such an attempt only as a possibly useful fire in the rear, which, with the naval attack in front, might bring the reigning Bashaw to terms. From this point of view, he was at first disposed to give Eaton the necessary authority. But further information, and his natural caution, led to a change of plan, so that he gave him instead a general commission as Navy Agent, with nothing definite to do. With this very unsatisfactory authorization as the best he could get, General Eaton went in the winter of 1804 to Egypt, where the claimant, Hamet Caramali, had already gone, in despair of receiving American aid. Reduced to the rôle of a needy adventurer, he had joined the Mamalukes who were in revolt against the Egyptian Government. Eaton succeeded in interesting the reigning Viceroy in his scheme, so that the latter gave permission to Hamet to pass through the Egyptian lines, and then to raise an armed force for an attack on Tripoli.

A motley company of about five hundred Tripolitans and Arabs, with a few Greeks, and nine Americans, was collected, and in March, 1805, started for Derne, five hundred miles distant, on the way to Tripoli. On this march across the desert, which Henry Adams says was accomplished only by " a

sort of miracle," Eaton showed his thorough knowledge of Oriental character, and he certainly needed all his skill, coolness, and perseverance, to get through. At various times his camel-drivers refused to budge, his Arabs mutinied, their chiefs threatened his life, food and water became scarce, and his protégé lost heart and wanted to give it all up; but his own courage never failed.

On the 24th of April, the little army arrived at Derne, a city of 12,000 or 15,000 inhabitants, in the dominions of the Bashaw. Eaton sent in a demand for surrender, and the Governor returned the characteristic Oriental answer, "My head or yours." On the 27th, a combined attack on the town was made by Eaton on land, and three American men-of-war on the water side. After about two hours and a half of fighting, the place was captured, and the American flag was raised for the first time in token of possession in any part of the old world. After a few days, a force despatched by the Bashaw from Tripoli appeared, and a number of skirmishes occurred between them and Eaton's men, the latter being aided by the guns of our ships, and the place was successfully held.

And now events took a turn which brought upon our government grave imputations of bad faith. The Bashaw of Tripoli was naturally disturbed over the successful approach of his brother. He also knew that many of his subjects disliked him for his tyranny and looked with favor on the milder Hamet. He was therefore ready to make peace with the Americans to save his throne, and perhaps his head. Accordingly our Consul General to Algiers, Tobias Lear, went to

Tripoli and negotiated a treaty whereby prisoners were to be exchanged, man for man, and $60,000 ransom was to be paid for the excess of prisoners in the Bashaw's hands after the exchange. Thus Captain Bainbridge and his men gained their liberty after a captivity of twenty months. The cause of the unfortunate Hamet was dropped.

When the tenor of the treaty became known, General Eaton was filled with indignation. He, and in his view, the government also, were thoroughly committed to Hamet. Then too, the prospect was good for rescuing the officers and crew of the Philadelphia without ransom, and that would have done more than anything else to inspire all the North African pirates with respect for the United States. But the treaty was made, and the war was ended. Nothing remained but for the Americans and a few of their dupes to get out of Derne if they could; for the populace, who had accepted Hamet relying upon American support, were sure to rise and massacre them if they got wind of the duplicity about to be practised upon them. While appearances of maintaining the conflict were kept up, preparations for embarkation were secretly made. Hamet and his American and European auxiliaries, with Eaton last to leave the shore, had barely time to get to a safe distance from land, when their departure was discovered, and the people rushed to the shore with cries of rage and despair at finding that they had been betrayed. General Eaton never got over his feeling of resentment at the conduct of the government in this affair, and voiced his complaints so loudly that Congress declined to give him a medal,

as was at first contemplated, in recognition of his distinguished services. Hamet Caramali, for several years, received an allowance from our government. The people of Derne who had trusted us were left to the tender mercies of the Bashaw. Adams says, "to be massacred." This would naturally be their fate, and they certainly expected it, but I can find no positive statement that it actually befell them, unless Adams is to be understood as stating it in the words quoted.

The question naturally occurs, was our government open to the charge of acting in bad faith? To some extent, yes, though probably not to the extent that Eaton in his anger and disappointment claimed. The trouble went back to Jefferson's instructions to Eaton and the naval officers. These were apparently intentionally vague, issued with knowledge of what Eaton was going to do, and, while not authorizing it, leaving the way open to take advantage of it. Then too, the coöperation of the naval forces in the capture of Derne, the raising of the flag over the place, and its protection for some time by the guns of the ships, gave the people abundant reason to expect that we would stand by them.

On this occasion the United States went just far enough to accomplish its main purpose, and then backed out. We did here, though with differences of detail, essentially what some say that Dewey ought to have done at Manila. We found out that in the conditions existing in Eastern countries, it is impossible to do that without involving others in disaster whom it is our duty to protect. We would doubtless

have learned the same lesson in the fate of Manila if Dewey, after sinking the Spanish fleet, had turned around and sailed away.

The case of Hamet brings to mind the somewhat similar case of Aguinaldo, whom Admiral Dewey says he treated as an ally (to use his own words) "so far as to make use of him and his soldiers to assist in operations against the Spaniards." Both men were ambitious to rule, and naturally interpreted our actions in the light of their own expectations. The mistake in both cases was in using them in any other way than as regularly paid auxiliaries. Misunderstanding was inevitable. Aguinaldo, by his subsequent course, forfeited his claim on us. Hamet did not, and his claim was recognized by Congress, and provision was made for him as has been mentioned.

Another question is, were the terms of the treaty as favorable to us as they might have been? Probably not. We ought to have made a determined effort, in arranging the treaty, to secure the release of the Philadelphia's men without paying a cent. By taking proper advantage of the Bashaw's fears, we probably would have succeeded. The terms of the treaty were severely criticized, and were defended on the ground that if the Bashaw had been pressed too hard, he might have massacred the prisoners. But this does not seem likely. On two or three occasions, a bold demand for release without ransom brought prompt compliance. As it was, the pirates got what they wanted, namely ransom money—the very thing that had encouraged piracy in the Mediterranean for centuries. The pirates all along the coast saw that

they could, even while hard pressed, extort money from us, and after a while some of them were at their old tricks again, scouring the sea for our ships and crews.

Our new treaty with Tripoli, although more compliant than seems to have been necessary, was yet in some respects an advantageous one. For the first time within memory, a treaty had been made with one of the pirate States without the giving of a present as a preliminary inducement, and without providing for future payment of tribute. The $60,000 was also a small sum compared with the $500,000 which had been previously demanded. No European nation had ever secured such favorable terms, and the Pope declared that the young nation of the West had done more to discourage piracy than all Christendom in the past three hundred years.

The leading events of the war, such as the burning of the Philadelphia, the capture of Derne largely by the action of three ships, and the hand-to-hand conflicts in which the Americans had beaten the pirates in the mode of fighting in which they excelled—all these had inspired the sea-rovers with a wholesome dread of our navy. No more interference with our commerce occurred while our war-ships were in the Mediterranean. But when the war with England broke out, our ships were needed nearer home, and the pirates plucked up courage at the thought that they might never see them again. This hope was inspired, or strengthened, by representations from Englishmen that our navy would surely be swept out of existence. So in 1812, the Dey of

Algiers cast about for an excuse for letting his cruisers loose again upon our commerce. We were then paying tribute to Algiers, and had been paying it for the past seventeen years. The Dey bethought him that the Mohammedan year was a little shorter than ours, and that the difference had amounted in seventeen years to about six months, for which he concluded he had not received tribute. So he made a demand for the deficiency of $27,000. This was promptly paid. Disappointed, and at the same time encouraged by our submission, he next complained of the quality of the ship-stores which had been sent to him as tribute in 1812. This pretext he followed up promptly by dismissing our consul, and sending out his cruisers to bring in American ships. Fortunately we had few ships then in the Mediterranean, so that only one was captured with ten men on board. Our government offered for these men $30,000, but the Dey refused to open negotiations until he had accumulated a larger stock of captives.

While the war with England lasted, nothing more could be done. But as soon as it was over, a fleet was despatched to the Mediterranean to chastise the Dey. Decatur was placed in command at his own request, the Secretary of the Navy having allowed him to choose any service or any position at the disposal of the Department. His former exploits in the Mediterranean, his recent capture of the Macedonian in the war with England, the popular applause, and the rewards he had received from Congress, had given him a prominence much like that of Dewey at the present day, except in the matter of rank; for the

grade of Admiral was unknown in our navy until it was conferred on Farragut in the Civil War.

No better choice for Commander of the expedition could have been made. The name of Decatur was feared all along the North African coast. Moreover, the squadron under his command was smaller than the Algerian navy, and needed to be handled with skill and bravery. One of Decatur's admirable qualities was shown when he took command, namely, his personal regard for his men. He requested that all the surviving officers and men who had served under him in the Chesapeake, the United States, and the President, might have the opportunity to enlist on his flag-ship, and nearly all did so.

After a quick passage across the ocean, the fleet arrived at Gibraltar, where three of Decatur's ships, the Guerriere,* the Macedonian, and the Epervier, attracted special attention. Their names were unpleasant reminders to Englishmen, and for that reason rather agreeable proofs to other Europeans, of American prowess. The Algerine ships were out on a cruise, hunting for Americans. They found one, but not such an one as they were looking for. Decatur had lost no time at Gibraltar, and moved so rapidly that the Algerians were unaware of his presence in the Mediterranean, and their Admiral was taken off his guard. While separated from the rest of his fleet, he encountered Decatur, and after a sharp struggle he was killed and his flag-ship was captured. A little later, Decatur also caught another of the Dey's ships.

* A new ship, named for the one which was captured and destroyed.

Then he bore down upon Algiers, and reached it before the rest of the enemy's fleet could get there.

When the Dey learned of the loss of his Admiral and his best ship, he lost all his bravado, and sent to ask Decatur to come ashore and arrange for a treaty. But Decatur refused to sign a treaty anywhere but on the quarter-deck of his own flag-ship. The Dey's commissioner then begged for a short truce, but Decatur, mindful that the enemy's fleet might arrive at any moment, refused to grant a moment more than was necessary to row to shore, get the Dey's signature to the treaty he had already drawn up, and come back to the ship. He also demanded that the ten American captives be brought in the same boat with the signed treaty. All was done as he demanded. When the Dey signed the treaty, the British consul was reproached for having brought this humiliation on Algiers. Said the Dey's Prime Minister, "You told us that the Americans would be swept from the seas in six months by your navy, and now they make war upon us with some of your own vessels which they have taken from you."

By the treaty concluded on this occasion between the two countries, Algiers gave up the captives without ransom, promised never again to hold an American as a slave, and gave up for ever its claim upon the United States for tribute in any form. Thus within sixteen days of passing the Straits of Gibraltar, Decatur had brought the really formidable power of Algiers to terms, and had accomplished his mission. Here his authority for offensive operations ended. But, hearing of hostile acts of Tunis and Tripoli which

were not known in the United States when he started, he assumed the responsibility of bringing those powers also to terms. Sailing at once to Tunis, he demanded an indemnity of $46,000, and gave the Bey twelve hours in which to pay it. Without waiting for an answer, he set out in a boat to take soundings preparatory to an attack. The Bey looked out of his window, saw what he was doing, and recalled the burning of the Philadelphia at Tripoli. "I know that Admiral," he said, stroking his beard reflectively, and gave directions for paying the money. Decatur then went to Tripoli, where our flag had been insulted. Here he demanded $25,000 indemnity, the release of eight Sicilian and two Danish captives without ransom, and a salute to our flag. The Bashaw blustered at first, but soon cooled down and complied with all his demands.

These events struck a death blow at piracy in the Mediterranean. The pirates, after bluffing all Christendom for several centuries, had at last found their match. By Decatur's treaty with Algiers, the custom of exacting ransom and tribute, upon which the whole system of piracy rested, was stricken down. By his successful audacity at Tunis and Tripoli, the pirates were beaten at their own game by being forced to pay indemnity instead of demanding it. Admiration for Decatur, and gratitude and respect for the United States were everywhere awakened in Europe. In the following year, England, probably shamed by our example, refused any longer to trifle with piracy, and attacked Algiers, greatly weakening its power for mischief. But permanent suppression of the nuisance

was not secured until the French in 1830 conquered Algiers, and introduced civilized government into that ancient nest of pirates. Thus they completed the work which was commenced by the United States at the hand of Decatur.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF THE ORDER
OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA

3

No. 4

A Forgotten Connecticut Patriot

To Stephen Johnson
old Space

BY

COL. EDWARD EVERETT SILL

NEW HAVEN, CONN., A.D. 1901

The Order of the Founders and Patriots of America

The ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA was incorporated in the city of New York, March 18, 1896. The objects for which it was established are indicated in the second article of the Constitution, as follows :

1. To bring together and associate men whose ancestors struggled together for life and liberty, home and happiness, in this land, when it was a new and unknown country, and whose line of descent from them comes through patriots who sustained the colonies in the struggle for independence in the Revolutionary War.

2. To teach reverent regard for the names and history, character and perseverance, deeds and heroism, of the founders of this country and their patriotic descendants.

3. To inculcate patriotism in the Associates and their descendants.

4. To discover, collect and preserve records, documents, manuscripts, monuments and history relating to the first colonists, their ancestors and descendants.

5. To commemorate and celebrate events in the history of the Colonies and the Republic.

6. Other historical and patriotic purposes.

The Connecticut Society of the Order of the Founders and Patriots of America was organized May 9, 1896. The following are the Charter Associates of the Society:

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A Forgotten Connecticut Patriot

AN ADDRESS AT A MEETING OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF THE ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA, SEPTEMBER 20, A.D. 1900 . . .

BY

COL. EDWARD EVERETT SILL

THE TUTTLE, MOREHOUSE & TAYLOR COMPANY,
NEW HAVEN, CONN.

A FORGOTTEN CONNECTICUT PATRIOT.

In recent study of the records of Old Lyme, Connecticut, I was impressed with a new sense of our debt of remembrance and gratitude to some of the humbler builders of our nation without whose service the work of the greater leaders would have come to naught. It was the common touch of the plain people through the homes, the town-meeting and the pastorate which gave the colonial fathers hopeful conditions and opportunity. In their days the pastor of the local church and parish was the mentor and guide not alone in the paths of religion, but in the school and other walks of secular and civil life. Honored and esteemed for his personal virtues of character and scholarship; living in a time when books were few but deeply studied and newspapers almost unknown he easily became the leader of his people. He knew they, as well as he, had inherited the word and tradition of English natural and chartered rights of personal liberty, however obscured and fettered in the old land by kingly and ecclesiastical tyranny. In governmental theory they were not altogether republicans but rather satisfied monarchists, so long as their rights were not assailed. Their inherited loyalty was to the kingly person of the monarch rather than to assumed prerogative or the corruptions and tyranny of his court or ministry. They knew that at Marston Moor had been decided in negative the right of an English

king to tax and govern in his royal name. They wished him to reign rather than rule. They had never forgotten the story of Runnymede. From the lips of their fathers they had heard personal recollections of Naseby, Dunbar and Worcester and revered the memory of that great constructive statesman and soldier who, with his compatriots, on those and other fields, had wrought righteousness for the people of England. With Milton they felt—"Our liberty is not Caesar's; it is a blessing we have received from God himself; it is what we are born to."

In the middle of the eighteenth century the pastor of the First Church of Christ at Old Lyme, Connecticut, was Reverend Stephen Johnson, and after prelude of English and colonial life and conditions I would seek to recall some of his patriotic services.

He was a descendant of some of those planters in the wilderness, who "first sat down at New Haven" and later in the prevailing migratory spirit removed to Newark and Elizabethtown, New Jersey. His parents were Nathaniel and Sarah (Ogden) Johnson of Newark, where he was born May 17, 1724. He graduated at Yale College in 1743; pursued a course of study in Divinity; on July 26, 1744, he married Elizabeth, daughter of William and Sarah (Dunbar) Diodati, and on December 10, 1746, was ordained to the pastorate of the church at Old Lyme where he had an unbroken ministry of forty years. His field of usefulness was never bounded by his local parish. With earnest purpose his whole life was given to the religious, educational, social and political welfare of the people of the colony of Connecticut. In 1773 he was

elected a Fellow of the Corporation of Yale College, which office he held until his death.

William Diodati, his wife's father, was a scion of an old and illustrious Italian family some of whom in the time of the Reformation adhered to the Protestant faith with John Calvin and later as exiles took up their home in England. Early in the eighteenth century William Diodati established himself as a merchant in New Haven. He was a man of native as well as acquired traits of culture, evidenced among other things by his large library, nearly one hundred choice volumes of which were by his will bequeathed to Mr. Johnson.

At their deaths Mr. and Mrs. Diodati were interred in the ancient burial ground on the Old Green, where with scores of other of the early fathers and mothers of New Haven they were allowed to rest in peace until that unfortunate day of 1821 when unpatriotic if not unfilial hands so leveled and obliterated their graves that no one now knows their place of burial.

On assuming the Lyme pastorate Mr. Johnson became the successor to Reverend Jonathan Parsons, who went from there to the Presbyterian church at Newburyport, Mass. Mr. Parsons was the warm friend of the noted evangelist George Whitefield, who died at Parsons' house in 1770 and was buried beneath his pulpit. A son of Mr. Parsons, a young lawyer, who had remained in the vicinity of Old Lyme, afterward became the distinguished soldier Major General Samuel Holden Parsons, whom Washington trusted and who commanded a large number of the Connecticut troops in the Revolution.

In tracing the life of a New England colonist we almost of necessity find his roots of being in English soil. There, as everywhere, religious, political, social and physical conditions were chief forces in the making of public and private character.

To understand the development of our political institutions we must deeply know the lives of those by whom they were wrought. In the present belated but fortunate renascence of investigation into the foreign and domestic foundations of our history we are developing a quickened and more intelligent love of country and institutions. Priceless as are some of the records which have been preserved, it is greatly to be regretted that the fathers of the early wilderness had not clearer vision of the needs of the future and studiously made and preserved more written records of state, people and families—their faiths and experiences. There is much interest in thought of the tenacity with which the colonists maintained and exercised the right of popular assembly for the discussion of grievances. The town-meeting was the forum where, on questions of public or local interest, the plain and humble were peers of the great. They had early learned that the tenure of their rights was at any time liable to assault. Repeatedly, by force or indirection, had crown or ministry, from the earliest settlements to the opening of the Revolution, attempted to seize or nullify their charters lest too much of rights had been granted the people. As early as April 28, 1634, Charles I. had issued his Patent to a Commission of twelve dignitaries of church and state with the Archbishop of Canterbury at its head,

designed to annul the charters already given the American colonists by specifically granting to such Commission, or any five of them, full power of legislation and of the purse, the sword, the regulation of religious worship, the disposal of property, of taxation and commerce, with absolute power of imprisonment or of life and death over the individual.

Before continuing this sketch of Stephen Johnson, which from lack of records must be brief as to his private and personal life and later will mainly relate to his patriotic public service in opposition to the British Stamp Act, permit as matter of historical continuity a brief discussion of the history and character of the New England colonists, with also a glance at the French and English struggle for this continent, all of which culminated in the American Revolution. A visible and unbroken chain reaches from Jamestown and Plymouth Rock to the Declaration of Independence.

More than twenty-five years before Elizabeth came to her throne six thousand copies of Tyndale's version of the New Testament, printed in Germany, had been scattered through England.

Discoveries by land and sea had opened the insular mind to a glimpse of the vastness of the outer world with its numbers of people, their varied religions, laws and customs. Hakluyt's "*Divers Voyages*" in its black-letter text was already in many libraries. While this stimulated curiosity, leading to more voyages of daring and enterprise to open pathways of future commerce, there still remained other great glories to come to the reign of Elizabeth in the development of literature.

Many of our colonial fathers had been born in this renewed sunlight of knowledge. Drayton and Daniel had both in verse told of their country's struggles for national existence and freedom. The hands of some of our colonists had in the year 1590 touched the covers of the first print of Edmund Spenser's "Faerie Queene," written while he was an exiled colonist. Like a sparkling stream bursting from the side of a mountain came this rich poem of Imagination whose freshening effect has never been lost. Others of the fathers might and doubtless had looked upon Shakspeare's living face and on the boards of the Globe Theatre at Southwark or at Blackfriars, have enjoyed the fun of "The Taming of the Shrew," and been thrilled with the storms of passion battling in the soul of Lear—for not every educated Puritan was averse to the Drama.

As if reserved for a day of need, to England was born early in the seventeenth century John Milton, "the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English liberty."

As a fact of literature as well as sidelight upon the representative Puritan character, it is interesting to recall that Milton's first published verse were the lines entitled "An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, W. Shakspeare," which in 1632 were printed as a prefix to the folio edition of Shakspeare's Plays. The epitaph closes with the oft-quoted words:

> "And so sepulch'red in such pomp dost lie
> That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

It cannot ever be profitless to ponder the momentous question which confronted the Pilgrim Fathers before they set foot upon the Rock. Fleeing from tyranny they could not for their guidance look to the laws and a system under which they had suffered. Cut loose from England without chart or compass of government or legislation—what system should they adopt? They were without European political precedent. They doubtless studied and discussed some partial adaptation of English laws to their extremity. On this question Dr. Leonard Bacon with his keen insight and sympathetic thought has said: "Those were the very laws from which they had fled; those laws would subject them at once, to the King, to the Parliament and to the prelates in their several jurisdictions. The adoption of the laws of England would have been fatal to the object of their emigration."

Where then could they turn? To this queston Dr. Cheever gives terse answer. "They could not take the Roman civil law; but they had a code in every man's hand in the Bible, laws given to a community emigrating like themselves from their native country, for the great purpose of maintaining in simplicity and purity the worship of the one true God. Like the Israelites of old, they were to be a people surrounded by the heathen, and intermingled among them, and needing the influence of laws framed with a special reference to such a corrupting neighborhood and intercourse. Like the Hebrews also they were a free Republican people, and needed laws for a community where there was no absolute power, where there were no privileged classes, laws whose aims should be

that equal and exact justice which is the only freedom."

It is a remarkable illustration of the spirit of charity and of the illuminating mental effect of a state of freedom after tyranny, to see to what extent the Pilgrim Fathers softened and mitigated the barbarous character of British penal laws. Commenting upon this fact again Dr. Bacon remarks that "the greatest and boldest improvement which has been made in criminal jurisprudence by any one act since the dark ages was that which was made by our fathers when they determined that the judicial laws of God, as they were delivered by Moses, should be accounted of moral equity, and generally bind all offenders, and be a rule to all the courts."

Let it not be forgotten that in adopting the Hebrew law instead of the law of England as a code of government for their own judicial use the colonists reduced to eleven in number the bloody catalogue of one hundred and fifty offenses at that time punishable, by English law, with death.

Where in the history of civilization have small bodies of men, voluntary exiles from home to a hostile wilderness, been compelled to face such stern and lofty problems of life and duty? Where in the annals of heroism are found brighter examples than among the early colonists of New England?

Finely does Sir George Otto Trevelyan say, "The lawgivers of the Puritan colonies had a blank parchment before them and they were equal to the task of ruling the lines along which the national character was to run."

In the words of old Warton, they were men and women who

"—fought God's battles and his works pursued."

Here in New England they had known their fellow-exile Sir Henry Vane, the Younger, whose life and death were self-consecrated to liberty. After years of public service here he returned to England, where under the Restoration of the perfidious Stuarts he in 1662 was brought to lay his head upon the block. As he parted his hair from the neck that the "two-handed engine" might have clear play he spoke, "I have kept a conscience void of offense till this day, and have not deserted the righteous cause for which I suffer." It was to him Milton inscribed his sonnet, the closing lines of which express the great ultimate principle involved in the colonization of America:

—"besides to know
Both spiritual pow'r and civil, what each means,
What serves each, thou hast learn'd which few
have done:
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe."

Like a hard cancer, poisonous and causing prolonged suffering in the body-politic of England was that inheritance of mediaeval wrong which had been handed down from one kingly reign to another far into the seventeenth century and which in the name of religion was ever ready to consort with evil for purpose of tyranny. Whether working through Church or State its mission was to blast every aspiration of the people, by centralizing civil and ecclesiastical authority in the hands of the few for the holy cause of "the

divine right of kings" and "the glory of God." Warping every movement of learning or commerce to kingly and priestly ends, it followed across the seas every merchant-adventurer or trembling exile, telling him "the king's arm is long and reaches far." The spirit of successive crowns if put in words would have said to the colonists, "So long as you contribute to us revenues nearly up to the measure of our greed you may do as you will in other matters." Royal revenues and commercial supremacy were the dominant thought. In the minds of the Stuarts and the Brunswicks colonists were sheep to be shorn. Neither in theory nor practice was there parental feeling on the part of the crown until after the Revolution of 1688, and but little then. The various Navigation Acts from 1651 to 1696 were framed for the purpose of exploiting trade for the benefit of England, but the rivalries and jealousies of France later introduced other burning questions than those of trade alone. The helpless colonists felt the galling yoke and from time to time made spirited protest, but the system was too profitable to corrupt courtiers and ministers for a change. Fearful of the imposition of greater burdens they sometimes carried forbearance beyond the point of virtue. Unconsciously, however, they were being schooled into new and higher views of empire.

In tracing the slow development of principles of religious and civil liberty there must be kept in mind the inevitable state of public and private morals when centralized despotism in varied forms was appealing to the baser elements of motive through greed of gold and lust of dominion. Absolutism was then essential

to both means and ends. In the name of religion the church was an ecclesiastical machine ready as changed circumstances and relations made politic to be either the professed friend, the hostile rival, or by masked intrigue "craftily outwitting her perjured coadjutor," the state, and invariably working in the interest of spiritual and intellectual tyranny.

The story of the Puritan exodus from oppression is a familiar one. It was in that time of unrest when quaint George Herbert, himself not a Puritan, in his pious musings upon "The Church Militant" wrote:

> "Religion stands on tiptoe in our land
> Ready to pass to the American strand."

Religious and political influences, whether of despotism or freedom, are slow in working out their ultimate results. In our appreciation of the work of the fathers here it is not needed to lose sight of their early narrowness of mental environment and vision. They were simply transplanted Englishmen who before their migration had been surrounded by insular prejudices and blindness. Though having in advance of their time the living germ of a conception of their rights as freemen, they had been fettered by the hard irons of power. Their migration had been their protest. Through self-imposed exile they sought freedom from wrong. Their glory lies in the fact that with each new revelation of truth their souls rose to a higher conception of the duties and dignity of freemen. With Edward Johnson they believed "The Lord Christ intends to achieve greater matters by this little handful than the world is aware of." At the outset they

did not clearly understand all the rights of others and were repressive. Their spirit was a heritage of English environment and education requiring time and growth of better conditions to supplant. We know that in Massachusetts and Connecticut in the early days "none but church members could vote or hold office. In other words, the deputies to the General Court were deputies of churches and the Governor and Magistrates were church members elected by church members. Church and State were not united; they were identified. A majority of the people, including men of wealth, ability and character, were deprived of their rights because they were not church-members."

Parkman, in his terse and brilliant manner, says: "New England Protestantism appealed to Liberty; then closed the door against her. On a stock of freedom she grafted a scion of despotism; yet the vital juices of the root penetrated at last to the uppermost branches, and nourished them to an irrepressible strength and expansion."

The strongest of the foundations and guaranties of English constitutional rights had been The Charter of Liberties of Henry I. at his coronation, A. D. 1100, wherein he acknowledged the limitations of royal power and embodied many of the jewels of later Magna Charta. In their time followed the two Charters of Stephen, that of Henry II., with the Constitutions of Clarendon, A. D. 1164, and the various Assizes of that century until, as a continuous stream constantly fed, they all, in A. D. 1215, emptied into the broad glories of Magna Charta. It was Chatham who said, "Those iron barons . . . were the guardians

of the people; and three words of their barbarous Latin, *nullus liber homo*, are worth all the classics." Contrasting the enlargement of the bounds of personal freedom in America and England, we may note that although present in England since the fourteenth century, men of the Jewish race there, until 1832, had no political rights, and even then until 1845 were debarred any civil, military or corporate offices, and not until 1846 was the public exercise of their religion legalized.

We should judge men and faiths by their higher rather than their lower development and expression. By this standard the Puritan need not be ashamed. In his geographical isolation he gradually arose to a freer comprehension and expression of the rights of man. The first cycle of freedom in America renewed and advanced the guaranties of constitutional rights on English soil everywhere. Pascal, in one of his letters, says: "The Jesuits have obtained a papal decree condemning Galileo's doctrine about the motion of the earth. It is all in vain. If the world is really turning round, all mankind together will not be able to keep it from turning or to keep themselves from turning with it."

From the close of the reign of Elizabeth nearly all Europe had been a battle ground of kingly jealousies, or wars of religious hate. In England the period of the Renascence was slowly merging into that of Puritanism, and was for the time the main current of England and the world's progress. With the Bible in its hand Puritanism was the first power to recognize and make an initial principle of the collective grandeur of

the people. It had welcomed the revival of letters, and the old University of Cambridge was already giving proof that blended convictions of pure religion and cultured learning were the highest means of power. One of the most interesting and valuable features of American colonial life in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was that of the educational development of the people. The Puritan fathers did not believe ignorance to be the mother of devotion in either religious or civil life. In the colonial laws of 1647 we find: "To the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our fathers, it is ordered in all the Puritan colonies that every township, after the Lord has increased them to the number of fifty households, shall appoint one to teach all children to write and read; and when any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families, they shall set up a grammar-school, the master thereof to be able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university; provided that if any town neglect the performance hereof above one year, that every such town shall pay five pounds to the next school, till they shall perform the order."

In the year 1701 Harvard College had been planted for nearly three-fourths of a century and was already a waxing light of learning. Yale was then a newly planted seed in the wilderness, its roots asking of the soil the best it could give of the elements of growth and strength, until now, like Harvard, she is a great banyan tree, beneath whose sheltering branches thousands of her sons daily gather. To these universities and their offspring of kindred institutions and men

we point as ultimate results and illustrations of seventeenth century Puritanism. In an era of few newspapers and schools; when the majority of population were scattered; when industry and thrift were the requirements of daily life and an idler was the deserved object of ridicule or scorn; when the homely virtues were cherished as indispensable to happiness and the upbuilding of character; when it was deeply recognized that plain living with high thinking upon serious questions of religious and political duty were of the essentials of life, the intellectual character of the people began to show signs of growth. For the first half of the eighteenth century the presence of hostile France on her borders was a standing menace and drain upon the industries of New England, whereby her educational interests also suffered.

The almost inextricable confusion of motives and events in the relations of England and France, both upon the continent of Europe and in America during the greater part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, make it difficult to form a satisfactory conclusion as to the validity of the rival claims of either. Justin Winsor says: "In considering the respective claims of the English and French to North America, it must be remembered that the conflict of rights is not only one on identical lines arising from discovery, but also one on opposed lines arising from different conceptions of the rights of discovery. The claims are also represented by contrary methods and purposes in enforcing them."

The prior occupancy of the lands by the Indians was a third factor of the problem. The early Eng-

lish colonists or traders by their charters or patents got a jurisdiction over, but no established fee in the lands conveyed them by the crown. They admitted that permanent occupation or possession could only follow extinguishment of the native title by purchase or treaty. The French claimed right of possession as against the native occupant, but cared less for the territory than for the privilege of controlling the fur trade in ecclesiastical and commercial interests. At the same time, as occasion demanded, the French seized the lands of the Indians without thought of recompense. It was not strange that these diverse policies puzzled the native occupant, causing a wavering or divided allegiance, some preferring the French and others the English without constancy to either. The Dutch and the English as their successors early learned that the Iroquois, in their marvelous governmental league and power, were the recognized leaders of the native tribes of this continent, and had cultivated and propitiated them while the French unwisely incurred their enmity. The English formed alliance with the Iroquois, and as the latter, who were a race of the highest martial qualities, made conquest of the other native tribes and territory, the English turned these conquests to their own advantage by the assumption that the Iroquois conquests under their alliances gave supremacy to English jurisdiction and possession. This English assumption, however, remained a point of dissent on the part of France down to the Quebec Act of 1774.

In the middle of the eighteenth century came that tremendous epoch of history, the Seven Years' War,

which involved both Europe and America in its issue. In the words of Trevelyan: "Problems had long been ripe for solution which concerned not only the British Kingdom, but all the civilized and almost the whole of the inhabited world. Whether France or England was to rule in India; whether the French manners, language or institutions, or the English, were to prevail over the immense continent of North America; whether Germany was to have a national existence; whether Spain was to monopolize the commerce of the tropics; who was to command the ocean; who was to be dominant in the islands of the Caribbean Sea; what power was to possess the choice stands for business in the great market of the globe; these were only some of the issues which had to be decided. . . . On the 18th of May, 1756, the unofficial hostilities between France and England, which had been smoldering or blazing for the space of four years on the shores of the Carnatic, and along the valleys of the St. Lawrence, the Ohio and the Mississippi, were sanctioned and extended by an open declaration of war." For seven long years the American colonists bore the burden of the defense of their homes from French and savage aggression and in maintaining the power and prestige of the British crown. Enormous was the drain upon their resources and homes, yet all cheerfully and loyally borne. They knew that all the great powers of Europe were in a mighty death grapple. Here the statesmen, the scholars and the plain people could not help but seriously ponder the question, What does it all mean to us and our offspring? After more than a century

of seeking freedom in the wilderness, are we to be delivered to the dominion of France with all which that implies?

There is no more piteous tale in American history than that of the burdens, sacrifices and sufferings of the New England colonists on behalf of the British crown during the French and English wars from 1755 to 1762, and a glimpse at the record throws in dark shadow the wickedness and fatuity of George III. and his ministry in seeking by the Stamp Act and other means to crush the spirit and the rights of those who had but just rendered such willing and unexampled service.

Keeping in mind the rigors of climate, the comparative sparseness of population and the ruggedness of our rocky soil whence the necessaries of life must be dug, we can better appreciate the service and sacrifice of the little colony of Connecticut by the men at war and the women in the homes, for they alike shared the burdens of the field and the perils of the tomahawk and scalping-knife at the hand of the Frenchman's savage allies. In 1764 was issued from the printing-press of Benjamin Mecom of New Haven a pamphlet entitled "Reasons why the British Colonies in America should not be charged with Internal Taxes by authority of Parliament, etc."

Besides setting forth the arduous defense made by the colonists for more than fifty years preceding 1755, it gives a condensed summary of services to the crown by the colony of Connecticut from 1755 to 1762. "In the year 1755, when Forces were raised by the Northern Colonies for removing Encroachments made

on His Majesty's territories in America by the French Connecticut raised a Thousand Men for that service, and also two thousand more the same year to reinforce the army at Lake George, then apprehended too weak to withstand the enemy. This number was two or three times the proportion of Connecticut compared with some other colonies concerned in that Expedition.

"In 1756 it raised Two Thousand five hundred men, which was double the number proposed by the King's Commander in Chief for the Colony's proportion in the service of that year. This was done by the Colony as it was supposed the Southern Colonies would fail of the proportion allotted for them to raise; and lest the Service should suffer, it exerted itself in such duplicate proportion.

"In 1757 the proportion demanded by His Majesty's Commander-in-Chief, for the service of that year, being Fourteen Hundred men, the Colony not only raised that number, but also, on intelligence of the attack on Fort William Henry, speedily sent forward about Five Thousand of the Militia, for the relief of that fortress and the protection of the country, then in great consternation in those parts.

"And in 1758 an expedition was set on foot for the reduction of Canada, and the colonies being called upon by the Crown to raise as many men as the number of their inhabitants would admit of; and as it was apprehended that in case of success, an end would be put to the war in these parts by that year's campaign, Connecticut exerted beyond all former efforts, in hopes of its being the finishing stroke, and

accordingly agreed to raise five thousand men and actually had but few short of that number in the field. But as this important design failed of accomplishment at that time, the Colony by Royal direction, was called upon strenuously to exert itself in the like service, in 1759, and even until the end of the war. And as what hath been done by the Colonies, on that extraordinary occasion in 1758, seemed constantly to be made the rule of demand upon them afterwards, the annual requisition of the Crown proved exceeding heavy upon the Colony of Connecticut, for it had indeed exerted itself vastly beyond its ability and any just proportion in that year; yet nevertheless they agreed to raise the number demanded in every succeeding year of the War, being spirited, as far as possible, to yield the strictest obedience to the King's command, and determined to persevere in his service with the utmost efforts." . . .

"In these services, from the year 1755 to the year 1762 inclusive, the expenses of the Colony over and above the Parliamentary grants amount to upward of four hundred thousand pounds; the large arrears of which sum will remain a heavy, distressing burden upon the people for many years to come. Moreover, several thousands of the hardiest and most able young men, the hope and strength of the farmers have been destroyed, lost and enervated in the many distant. arduous campaigns during the course of this terrible war. . . . And although, by the success of the military operations in America, large and most valuable acquisitions have been made to the British Dominions, yet the Colony of Connecticut gains nothing thereby

further than as it may be said to be concerned in the common Cause and general interest of the whole."

With the capitulation of Montreal and the Treaty of Paris, February 10, 1763, whereby the French forever lost permanent foothold on this continent, the American colonies were jubilant. The church bells of New England rang out notes of victory and rejoicing and the pulpits resounded with sermons of thanksgiving. The voice of Stephen Johnson gave glad acclaim, for had not many of his parishioners faced the frowning battlements of Ticonderoga, seen the lilies of France droop in humiliating surrender at Montreal, swelled the fearful death-roll at Havana, and elsewhere, too, witnessed the alternating victories and defeats incident to war?

Amid all the anxieties of the conflict while it lasted had been a ferment of thought in the minds of the people. Will success of the British crown strengthen or impair our liberties which we have so dearly bought? After all our arduous services will the crown lift from us the galling tyranny of the Navigation Acts and other devices to cripple and repress our trade and industries, or in arrogant consciousness of renewed strength will it impose new burdens upon us?

With bated breath as if afraid of their own thoughts they asked themselves the question how long their own endurance might last under new burdens of taxation, should they be imposed.

On the death of George II., in 1760, came to the throne his grandson, George III., perhaps the worst of the Brunswicks. Naturally a young man of many good parts, he had by his mother been unwisely trained

to undue conceptions of prerogative. "George, be king" had been her constant monition. In the clearer perspective of history Lord Brougham thus depicts his character:

"Of a narrow understanding, which no culture had enlarged; of an obstinate disposition, which no education, perhaps, could have humanized; of strong feelings in ordinary things, and a resolute attachment to all his own predilections, George III. possessed much of the firmness of purpose which, being exhibited by men of contracted mind without any discrimination, and as pertinaciously when they are in the wrong as when they are in the right, lends to their characters an appearance of inflexible consistency, often mistaken for greatness of mind, and not seldom received as a substitute for honesty. In all that related to his kingly office he was the slave of deep-rooted selfishness; and no feeling of a kindly nature was ever allowed access to his bosom, whenever his power was concerned, either in its maintenance, or in the manner of exercising it. In other respects he was a man of amiable disposition, and few princes have been more exemplary in their domestic habits, or in the offices of private friendship. But the instant that his prerogative was concerned, or his bigotry interfered with, or his will thwarted, the most unbending pride, the most bitter animosity, the most calculating coldness of heart, the most unforgiving resentment, took possession of his whole breast, and swayed it by turns. The habits of friendship, the ties of blood, the dictates of conscience, the rules of honesty, were alike forgotten; and the fury of the tyrant, with the resources of

a cunning which mental alienation is supposed to whet, were ready to circumvent or destroy all who interposed an obstacle to the fierceness of unbridled desire."

As a pen-picture drawn by a loyal and scholarly Englishman, perhaps we may accept his estimate of character as explaining the attitude of George III. toward the American colonists.

The rejoicings of the people of England and America over the termination of the Seven Years' War had hardly ceased before George III. and his ministry with a fatuity bordering on madness of judgment and purpose began to plan new outrages upon the rights of the American colonists. Within two years there had been created sixteen new peerages with the unblushing purpose of making a servile majority in the House of Lords.

A fortnight after the signatory powers had concluded the Treaty of Paris, Charles Townshend became First Lord of Trade, with administration of the colonies, and with support of the ministry inaugurated a new system of colonial government. Upon the plea that the expulsion of the French had been a great relief and advantage to the colonies, it was announced there would be no more direct requisitions by the King upon the Colonial Assemblies for supplies, but the colonies were to be taxed by Act of Parliament; Colonial Governors and Judges were to be appointed and paid by the crown, who were to be supported here by a standing army of twenty regiments; and the expenses of this force were to be largely paid by money wrung from the people of the colonies by Par-

liamentary taxation. To their own impoverishment the colonies had voluntarily voted money and supplies in the long contest with France, and without time to recuperate from the strain they were to have forced upon them the support of an undesired and needless military establishment over their own homes and resources. Since its conquest of Canada the crown had regarded that province as a military *point d'appui* in support of its policy of enforcing its supremacy over all the American colonies.

Though the retirement of France had left on this continent no enemy to the British arms, there still remained here ten regiments of troops quartered upon the people for their support, and later to enforce the secret schemes of the ministry should they be resisted. The old Navigation Acts of 1660 and 1663 for the purpose of exploiting British shipping and trade were to be rigorously enforced.

In 1733 had been passed by Parliament the Molasses Act intended to restrict the trade of the Northern colonies. Though its prohibitory duties invited extensive smuggling, the Act was five times renewed by Parliament until 1764, when it was made perpetual.

The home of the family is the place where the affections centre. The attitude of the colonists upon questions of government and taxation was based upon domestic as well as public reasons. Here in the middle of the eighteenth century an able-bodied man in extreme poverty was almost unknown, and equally so one native-born without the common rudiments of an education. Of such it was rarely the case that the head of a family did not own his house and the land

upon which he lived. With him the question of taxation by a foreign legislative body was not one of shifting political expedients but a matter of public principle vitally related to the present welfare of his home and the inheritance of his children.

The ministerial theory of colonial trade was that of the gambler with his loaded dice. By its various Acts of Trade the crown sought to oblige the colonies to purchase their goods in its markets, and to further cripple their local industries by compelling their exports to be carried in British bottoms with clearances for ports in England alone—a system of commercial vassalage and robbery. In April, 1764, George Grenville succeeded Bute as Prime Minister, though in the private capacity of confidential friend and adviser, Bute still "sat squat like toad" at the ear of George III.

On April 5th Grenville procured passage of the Sugar Act, imposing duties upon certain of both colonial exports and imports, to take effect on and after September 29, 1764. In the previous month he had announced his intention to introduce at the next Parliament a Stamp Bill.

In the meantime the several Agents maintained by the colonies to look after their general interests in England had received from the crown its crafty suggestion that they communicate with their respective governments in order that the colonies, if desirous, might agree upon some other method of their taxation for benefit of the crown. For many years the colonists had been politically neither blind nor deaf. They knew that if they gave serious official consideration to

the question and agreed upon any plan it would commit them to the principle of Parliamentary taxation of themselves. The prospect was viewed with alarm in America, where the enforcement of the Acts of Trade was already disastrous to commerce, and when, in February, 1765, the proposed Stamp Bill was brought before Parliament by Grenville the Colonial Agents declined to recommend any substitute for the Bill, but earnestly remonstrated against it. They also presented petitions against it from the Colonial Assemblies and from London merchants interested in American trade, but their petitions were refused consideration under a rule adopted by the House of Commons forbidding the reception of petitions on money-bills.

The Stamp Bill passed the Commons by a vote of 205 to 49 and the House of Lords without a division. During the discussion of questions relating to the colonies, Benjamin Franklin had for some time been in England watching the trend of influences and events. On the night after the passage of the Stamp Act he wrote to Charles Thomson, afterward the Secretary of the Continental Congress: "The sun of liberty is set; the Americans must light the lamps of industry and economy." To Jared Ingersoll, Agent of the colony of Connecticut, then in London, he said, "Go home and tell your countrymen to get children as fast as they can," implying the inevitable and long struggle to come.

At time of passage of the Stamp Act, George III. was in partial retirement in one of those attacks of insanity to which he was subject. A Commission was appointed to act for the King in approval of the

Act. It is stated as matter of fact that on March 22d the Act was presented to the King in person while in one of his immediate conditions of irresponsibility, and with his own hand he enacted the farce or tragedy of affixing his royal approval. Its passage by Parliament had been an act of political insanity and any method of its approval could hardly be questioned. The Stamp Act provided that from and after the first day of November, 1765, "there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid unto his Majesty, his heirs, and successors, throughout the colonies and plantations of America, which now are or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, etc."

Then followed an enumeration by name of almost every conceivable legal document or conveyance, agreement or obligation, on land or sea, commercial parchment, paper or transaction, marriage license, bill, bond, note, book, pamphlet, almanac, newspaper or advertisement in any gazette, newspaper or pamphlet, each for its legal validity requiring that it be written or printed upon stamped paper alone.

Heavy penalties were prescribed for violation of any of the terms of the Act.

Among other things, Sec. I. of the Act provided that upon "any register, entry, testimonial or certificate of any degree taken in any university, academy, college or seminary of learning within the said colonies and plantations, a stamp duty of two pounds" should be paid.

Hardly any provision excited more indignation here than did Sec. LVII., which declared that "Forfeitures

and penalties incurred after Sept. 29, 1765, for offenses against the Sugar Act, and for offenses against any other Act or Acts of Parliament relating to the trade or revenues of the said colonies or plantations, shall and may be prosecuted, sued for and recovered in any court of record, or in any Court of Admiralty in the respective colony or plantation where the offense shall be committed, or in any Court of Vice Admiralty appointed or to be appointed, and which shall have jurisdiction within such colony, plantation or place, . . *at the election of the informer or prosecutor.*"

The annual Mutiny Act authorized the sending to the colonies such number of troops as might by the ministry at any time be deemed necessary.

In April was also passed the Quartering-Act, which required the constables, tithingmen, magistrates and other civil officials of villages, towns, etc., in America, to billet and quarter the officers and soldiers in His Majesty's service, and provide food, drink and transportation for them, with penalties for any refusal. America will never forget the names of that generous and heroic minority who in Parliament pleaded the rights of the colonists as Englishmen and the impolicy of the proposed tyranny.

It was after Charles Townshend, in his attempted argument upon the equity of taxation had said, "Will these children, planted by our care, nourished by our indulgence to strength and opulence, and protected by our arms, grudge to contribute their mite to relieve us from the heavy burden under which we live?"—that Colonel Barré, who as the fellow soldier

of Wolfe had shared the dangers and glories of Quebec, where he received a well-nigh fatal wound while supporting the body of his dying chief on that field, arose in Parliament and in impromptu but impassioned eloquence, made that response now so familiar that it has become a classic of patriotism. It was in this speech that Colonel Barré applied to the abused but still loyal American colonists the title of "Sons of Liberty"—words which as soon as heard here gave name to an organization of great fearlessness and influence in kindling the fires of resistance to the British crown.

With the passage of the Stamp Act came to all the customs officials here imperative instructions to enforce to the letter the intolerable Navigation Acts. With the temptation of large personal emoluments, the acts of the various civil, military and naval officials of the customs became a system of legalized tyranny and robbery.

The post-offices being under British control, the utmost secrecy was necessary and patriotic riders carried from colony to colony matters of important intelligence. Reprints of the Stamp Act, entitled "The folly of England and ruin of America," were secretly scattered among the people.

The colonists had met Charles Townshend's policy by an agreement not to import or consume British goods, and in a single year the amount of such exports from England to the colonies fell off 70 per cent. Writing of these events, Trevelyan says: "All the British regiments which had ever sailed from Cork or Portsmouth could not force Americans

to purchase British merchandise. . . . One function the soldiers might be called upon to discharge; and it was evidently in the minds of the Cabinet which sent them out. As soon as the news of their arrival at Boston had reached London, the supporters of the Ministry in manifest concert with the Treasury Bench moved an address to the King, praying that persons who in the view of the royal governor of any colony had committed or failed to disclose acts of treason might be brought over to England and tried under a statute of Henry VIII."

The ministry had already declared many of the colonial leaders guilty of treason and liable to be seized and transported three thousand miles for the farce of a trial with the certainty of never seeing their homes again. Men like Samuel Adams, James Otis, Stephen Johnson and other "trumpets of sedition" well knew that under the old Tudor statute the noose of a halter was at no time far from their necks.

In the village of Old Lyme then lived two men unbribable and unawed by power, who looked with eyes single to the welfare of their fellow men and to whose memories our commonwealth can never overpay its debt of grateful remembrance. One was the Reverend Stephen Johnson and the other one of his parishioners, John McCurdy, a cultivated gentleman of high character and large property-interests, whose name belongs in that galaxy of noble Scotch-Irishmen, who in the Revolution so bravely in both forum and field served our country. At this time for purpose of acquiring new political information, McCurdy

quietly journeyed to New York, where in the inner circle of the Sons of Liberty he learned that certain important papers were being secretly passed from hand to hand for perusal. Obtaining a copy under strongest injunction of secrecy except with the most reliable, he hastened back to his home for consultation with Stephen Johnson. The old, many-gabled colonial home of McCurdy still stands a quaint ornament to the village street of Lyme. Its furniture yet remains as when its floors felt the tread of Washington, Lafayette and others, their compatriots of the Revolution. Could the walls of the library of that historic mansion give phonographic echo to the counsels and plans of Johnson and McCurdy for resistance to the Stamp Act, a rich contribution would be made to the annals of American patriotism.

After secret consultation between Johnson, McCurdy and the New London printer, Timothy Green, in September, 1765, Johnson began the preparation of a series of papers intended to arouse the people and strengthen the minds of their delegates to the approaching Congress of colonial representatives in the city of New York. Each paper when written was carefully considered by Johnson and McCurdy and then the shrewd diplomacy of the latter secured its secret transmission to Green for publication in his New London Gazette. Johnson's first paper over the pen-name of "Addison" appeared in the Gazette on September 6th and was addressed "To the Freemen of the Colony of Connecticut." His second paper was addressed "To The Printers" doubtless with the object of its being reproduced in other colonial

newspapers. Weekly thereafter until November first appeared in the Gazette other of those impassioned and logical appeals and arguments from Johnson's pen, urging forcible resistance. Their dangerous authorship was known only to Johnson, McCurdy and Green. The excitement these papers created was unbounded and copies were carried by fleet riders to all the colonies from New Hampshire to Georgia and printed in their newspapers. These letters presented every argument from the natural, constitutional and chartered rights of the people and were a mighty force in arousing and uniting them in defense of their liberties. A continuous chain of logical argument and appeal runs through them all, making brief extracts unfitting. They should be read as a whole, and the reader will find his soul stirred to admiring reverence for the heroic patriotism of their author. Perhaps the most philosophical and powerful article from his pen was a sermon preached by him at Newport, R. I., on Public Fast Day, Dec. 18, 1765, and entitled "Some Important Observations on Account of the Peculiar Circumstances of the Present Day."

In all his writings, Johnson held and taught the belief later expressed by Jefferson that "The only firm basis of national liberty is the conviction that liberty is the gift of God."

In the spring of 1766 the Stamp Act was repealed, but in such a way that its most offensive feature was reasserted. The King had stubbornly opposed any repeal except it was accompanied by a Declaratory Act asserting the right of the Parliament to pass and

enforce Acts for taxation of the colonies. For the financial burdens likely to result from the Stamp Act the colonies cared not so much. Their contention was against the right of the Parliament to tax them at all. The position of the colonists was well stated by their Congress of 1775 when it said to the people of Great Britain: "We are accused of 'forgetting the allegiance which we owe to the power that has protected and sustained us.' . . . What allegiance is it that we forget? Allegiance to parliament? We never owed—we never owned it." The Declaratory Act was passed with result of widely renewing jealousy and distrust of the crown. Though the Stamp Act had been thus repealed, there were other pending questions pregnant with danger. The operation of the Mutiny Act had the year before been extended to the American colonies. It required the colonists at their own expense to furnish the British troops quartered upon them with "fire, candles, vinegar, salt, bedding, utensils for cooking, beer or cider and rum."

More of new and grave constitutional questions arose between the crown and the colonies. While in England the Stamp Act had been largely a speculative question it was in America a vital one, for on its event the meanest settler felt his freedom and property to depend. The critical state of feeling here is somewhat shown in the diary of Captain John Montresor, a British officer of engineers, who had been for many years in service here, and much of the time with the colonial troops in the French and English War. While on duty in the city of New York in 1766, he records under date of February 24th in his diary:

"Meetings as usual with the Sons of Liberty. Colonel Putnam, a Connecticut Colonel, sent advice to them from thence, that he would assist them with their Militia to the utmost lives and fortunes to prevent the Stamp Act being enforced in this Province or any other."

"February 27th. The very Inadvertant Sons of Liberty make no scruples of publickly declaring that they are for shaking off the Yoke of Dependency of their Mother Country."

"March 24th. By advice from Connecticut matters are arrived to greater lengths than in any other province, having allready provided themselves with a magazine for Arms, Ammunition, etc.—and ten thousand men at the shortest warning for opposing the Stamp Act, etc., all under the command of a Connecticut man called Col. Putnam, one that has received his Majesty's money, having been employed during the War as a Provincial Colonel."

The self-poised yet indignant and fiery patriotism of the Lyme pastor, as expressed in his letters to the New London Gazette, had wrought its intended work in the minds of the people of Connecticut and the other colonies. Though a painful question to consider, the inevitable current of events was carrying them to the ultimate goal of political independence, even through blood.

By request of the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, Mr. Johnson preached on May 10, 1770, the Anniversary Election Sermon for that year, taking his text from II Samuel, 23: 3. "The Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must

be just, ruling in the fear of God." His theme was—"Integrity and Piety the best Principles of a good Administration of Government." Arguing that civil government and the rights of the people under it are "the ordinance of God," he says: "These natural rights, civil and religious, are the gifts of God, as such sacred, nor may any but He, as original proprietor, resume them at pleasure." He further declares "the good of the community to be the high end of government, and the supreme law of the State. . . . If the great and essential rights and privileges of the people be invaded and supplanted, usurped and destroyed, the design of government is subverted, and the end of it frustrated in the primary and fundamental intention of it. . . . Under an administration formed by a spirit of righteousness effectual care will be taken, that the properties of subjects, in their great essential rights and privileges, they have by nature or constitution, be preserved to them inviolate. . . . When leaders of administration openly adopt arbitrary and offensive measures in a free state, government is corrupt at its fountain, and the foundations of it are shaken."

In Boston, New York, Philadelphia and other seaport towns previous to the Revolution, large tea-parties were had where no economy was shown in the quantity used of the fragrant leaf. The sturdy patriot-colonists refused to compromise with conscience by purchasing or using taxed tea. Not to be outdone by their larger neighbors, the people of Old Lyme had their tea-party, to which all the village was invited. On March 16, 1774, a peddler from Martha's

Vineyard came into the place on horseback with one hundred pounds of tea in his saddlebags. He was arrested and examined, and in the evening the Sons of Liberty assembled and built a bright fire on the village street near Mr. Johnson's church, and having committed the peddler's whole stock in trade to the flames, they buried the ashes on the spot.

With unwearied watchfulness of events from the first introduction of the Stamp Bill until the outbreak of the Revolution, Mr. Johnson had followed the faithful work of his pastorate and other duties. The fires of political discontent smoldered until, fanned by a succession of tyrannies, at four o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, April 19, 1775, the flames burst from the muzzles of guns at Lexington. Then in a moment an inchoate nation was born. At ten o'clock that morning the local Committee of Safety started a fleet rider to carry to the patriots of the Atlantic coast the news that the shedding of blood had begun. These were his credentials:

"WATERTOWN,

Wednesday morning near 10 of the clock.

To all friends of American liberty, be it known that, this morning before break of day, a brigade consisting of about 1,000 or 1,200 men, landed at Phip's farm, at Cambridge, and marched to Lexington, where they found a company of our colony militia in arms, upon whom they fired without any provocation, and killed six men and wounded four others. By an express from Boston, we find another brigade are now upon their march from Boston, supposed to be about 1,000. The

bearer, Trail Bissel, is charged to alarm the country quite to Connecticut, and all persons are desired to furnish him with fresh horses as they may be needed. I have spoken with several who have seen the dead and wounded. Pray let the delegates from this colony to Connecticut see this; they know Colonel Foster, of Brookfield, one of the delegates.

J. PALMER,

One of the Committee of S. Y." (*Safety.*)

Each Committee of Safety on the route of this spirited messenger indorsed upon his credentials the date and hour of his arrival, thus showing how far and fast he had ridden. Before the close of April 19th he reached Worcester, Mass. At 4 P. M. of Thursday he was at Norwich, Conn., and at New London at 7 o'clock the same evening. At one o'clock on Friday morning he was at the door of Stephen Johnson in Old Lyme; at 10 o'clock of that forenoon at Guilford; at noon at Branford; in afternoon at New Haven and Milford, and at 8 o'clock on Saturday morning at Fairfield. Worn with the intense physical strain, but unfaltering, the gallant rider pressed on until his horse, panting and flecked with foam, dashed down the old Bowery Road into Broadway, New York, on Sunday morning at the hour when people were assembling for public worship. Drawing rein at the door of the rooms of the Committee of Safety, where Sears, Lamb, MacDougall, and other patriots were gathered, Bissel presented his credentials. At 4 o'clock that afternoon he crossed the river into New Jersey, and pushed on with his

PUBLICATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF THE ORDER
OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA

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No. 6

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL AND HIS FRIENDS

BY
FREDERICK HULL COGSWELL, ESQ.

NEW HAVEN, CONN., A.D. 1902

The Order of the Founders and Patriots of America

The ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA was incorporated in the city of New York, March 18, 1896. The objects for which it was established are indicated in the second article of the Constitution, as follows :

1. To bring together and associate men whose ancestors struggled together for life and liberty, home and happiness, in this land, when it was a new and unknown country, and whose line of descent from them comes through patriots who sustained the Colonies in the struggle for independence in the Revolutionary War.

2. To teach reverent regard for the names and history, character and perseverance, deeds and heroism, of the founders of this country and their patriotic descendants.

3. To inculcate patriotism in the Associates and their descendants.

4. To discover, collect and preserve records, documents, manuscripts, monuments and history relating to the first colonists, their ancestors and descendants.

5. To commemorate and celebrate events in the history of the Colonies and the Republic.

6. Other historical and patriotic purposes.

The Connecticut Society of the Order of the Founders and Patriots of America was organized May 9, 1896. The following are the Charter Associates of the Society:

Maj. Frank William Mix,
Charles Mather Glazier,
John Emery Morris,
Francis Durando Nichols,
James Emery Brooks,
Jonathan Flynt Morris,
William Charles Russell,
Col. Edward Everett Sill,
Col. Charles Alexander Jewell.

OFFICERS OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY

1902–1903

COL. EDWARD EVERETT SILL, GOVERNOR, . . *New Haven*
WILLIAM CHARLES RUSSELL, DEPUTY GOVERNOR, *Hartford*
REV. DRYDEN WILLIAM PHELPS, CHAPLAIN, . . *New Haven*
CHARLES LEWIS NICHOLS CAMP, SECRETARY, . *New Haven*
ERNEST BRADFORD ELLSWORTH, TREASURER, . *Hartford*
SYLVESTER CLARK DUNHAM, STATE ATTORNEY, . *Hartford*
GEORGE FRANKLIN NEWCOMB, REGISTRAR, . . *New Haven*
WILLIAM FRANCIS JOSEPH BOARDMAN, GENEALOGIST, *Hartford*
CHARLES HENRY SMITH, LL.D., HISTORIAN, . . *New Haven*

COUNCILLORS

(*Three Years*)

HENRY WHITING LUPTON, ... *Stratford*
COL. CHARLES ALEXANDER JEWELL, . . . *Hartford*
COL. NORRIS GALPIN OSBORN, ... *New Haven*

(*Two Years*)

HON. JAMES DUDLEY DEWELL, ... *New Haven*
WALTER COLLYER FAXON, ... *Hartford*
ROBERT CROMER GLAZIER, ... *Hartford*

(*One Year*)

THOMAS JEFFERSON BOARDMAN, ... *Hartford*
MAJOR GEORGE WHITE TUCKER, ... *Waterbury*
HON. THEODORE SEDGWICK GOLD, . . *West Cornwall*

James Gates Percival and His Friends

AN ADDRESS AT A MEETING OF THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF THE ORDER OF THE FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF AMERICA, APRIL 19, A.D. 1902 . . . . . .

BY

FREDERICK HULL COGSWELL, ESQ.

THE TUTTLE, MOREHOUSE & TAYLOR COMPANY,
NEW HAVEN, CONN.

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL AND HIS FRIENDS.

In the earlier half of the last century the streets of New Haven were trodden by a singular man. He was fairly tall, slender to the bone, and stooped slightly as he walked, with his eyes fixed upon the ground.

His clothes were shabby; his trousers, more often than otherwise, frayed at the bottom, and patched in various places with his own hands. Eight months of the year he wore an old glazed cap with ear-tabs of sheepskin, the woolly side turned in; and a gray cloak. Whenever the cap came off it revealed a classic head, and for the first time one would notice the fineness of the features, and eyes of unusual splendor.

The man was saluted by the booksellers and a few of the older college professors as Doctor Percival. The community at large had neither the pleasure nor the honor of his acquaintance.

The Doctor was a hermit. He had no means of support, visible or otherwise. Curious ones who watched him go home, saw him enter the State Hospital Building, and climb two flights of stairs. Then after carefully looking about to see that no one was near, he would quietly unlock his door and disappear. When he had entered, he fastened the door with an old piece of rope attached to the knob, and passed over a neighboring projection.

If we are inquisitive, and want to see how the hermit lives, we shall have to make forcible entry, for while he is not exactly discourteous, he will never invite us in.

We find that there are three connecting rooms; one containing his library, another filled with geological specimens; the third has a stove in one corner, a cupboard in another, and a cot-bed in another. An ancient mattress lies on the bed. A stick of firewood is under one end, raising it so that it will serve as a pillow. On the mattress lie two old woollen blankets, very dirty. There are no sheets or other bedding. On the wall at the foot of the cot is a large black spot of irregular shape. A case for Sherlock Holmes? No, not so bad as that. The poet sleeps with his boots on, and poets' boots when worn to bed make black spots on the wall.

The floor has never known a broom since the carpenter swept up the shavings. The accumulation of unassorted material is two inches deep, and there are well defined paths leading to the cupboard, the stove, the bed, and the two other rooms.

The Doctor was scarcely an epicure. The neighboring grocery store supplied the crackers and the herring and the dried beef.

The many considered him "queer," and thought no more about him; a few looked upon him as a neglected genius, a scholar of rare attainments, and a gifted poet whom posterity would know and appreciate.

Here, surely, we have a strange character, and if we spend a little time in its analysis, we shall find a

life as strange and erratic as any man of genius could wish. Lowell disposed of Percival with a savage humor that perhaps did not make full allowance for the conditions under which his mind and character were developed. He flayed him unmercifully, as a pretender without merit. It is quite certain that Lowell did not give him sympathetic treatment. Perhaps if we take pains to look behind the results, we may, while agreeing with Lowell as to the value of his poetical work, be less severe with him personally.

Percival was the son of the village doctor in Kensington, Connecticut, and was born in 1795. He was a shy, sensitive child, not given to the company of other boys. During recess at school he would remain indoors, and complain if the youngsters outside made too much noise. His father, who is said to have been affectionate and kind, would seem to have been woefully lacking in judgment; for in order to overcome this childish timidity, he once placed him on a horse and rode with him into a sham battle. This action, instead of curing the weakness, threw the lad into convulsions. What effect this performance had upon his subsequent life can only be imagined.

The boy found great pleasure in outdoor life, and early gave evidence of a scientific mind. Curiously enough, one of his boyish passions was for geology, the science to which he devoted the latter years of his life, and in which lies his greatest achievement. Another manifestation of his scientific leanings was indicated by his taking the skeleton of a goose, which he had found, and naming and labelling the bones. He was also an extensive reader, absorbing almost

everything in his father's library. He delighted to wander about the woods and fields with such volumes as Thomson's Seasons, Bloomfield's Farmer's Boy, and the poems of Doctor Dwight and Joel Barlow.

When Percival was in his twelfth year his father died, and the boy studied for a time with the Rev. Benoni Upson, D.D., the village minister. Then he was placed at school at Hempstead, Long Island, with his mother's brother, the Rev. Seth Hart, who kept a preparatory school. At the end of a year he was placed in charge of the Rev. Israel B. Woodward, of Wolcott. Another year was spent at Hempstead, and he entered Yale at sixteen. A school fellow at Wolcott, the Rev. Edward Robinson, D.D., thought he wrote his first poem while there.

Percival did not get along well at college. His previous life had been too exclusive, and his experiences not sufficiently robust to fit him for that sort of life. During his freshman year he wrote largely, and one day took a collection of his poems, which he called "The Seasons of New England," to Noah Webster. Webster advised him to wait. Percival smothered his disappointment as best he could, and took his collection to General Hezekiah Howe, one of New Haven's old-time publishers and booksellers. General Howe declined to even examine it, and Percival returned to the Campus with the despised manuscript under his arm. He had previously told certain of his classmates of his ambition, and he found them waiting. They asked him how he succeeded, and his reply was a flood of tears. He finally managed to say between the sobs, "I don't care, I will be a poet!"

This made him the laughing stock of the college. He endured the jeers and taunts for a time, and finally retaliated by writing a lampoon aimed at some of his worst tormentors. This gave the boys fresh material, and they made such faithful use of it that Percival was driven from college during his sophomore year.

It seems almost unkind to refer to these youthful productions, but a good understanding of the case requires it. Could Percival have had the benefit of wise counsel at this period, some of the torments and failures of an unhappy life might have been spared.

He needed restraining and careful direction, as an extract from the "Seasons of New England" will show. In describing the farmer at chore-time, he says:

> "The Horse neighs loudly for his provender,
> The swine squeal for their wonted food, the
> fowls crowd round the kitchen door & cackling
> eat the scattered crumbs. Meanwhile, the
> cheerful swain whistles, as he performs his
> varied tasks and feels more real joy than mon-
> archs know.
> When he has stor'd his wood & milk'd his cows
> He fills his kettle, stirs the enlivening flame
> and ready gets his frugal homely meal."

(It will be observed that Mrs. Farmer does not get the supper. It is not only interesting but instructive, to notice how Mr. Farmer does it.)

> "First shakes he in the flour, & agitates
> The mixture with his pudding stick, until
> The bubbles indicate that it is done;
> Then on the plate he pours the steaming food,

Prepares the luscious milk which satisfies
His healthy appetite, nor does he feel,
While he partakes this dish with his fond wife
and hearty children, half those fears which
sour the splendid courtier's life.
His supper past, he solemn says, 'Thanks to
Almighty God and to his suffering Son for this repast';
Then laughs away the night in guiltless mirth."

We are doubtless justified in presuming that farmers didn't act that way in the days of our forefathers, any more than they do now.

Percival's chief literary fault, now as always, was his inability to criticize and improve his own work. Instead of making it so good as to compel admiration, he blamed an unappreciative world for not admiring that which was not wholly admirable. He regarded himself too seriously, and was entirely without humor; unpromising conditions under which to develop a poetic instinct.

On leaving college, where a man without humor is sometimes sadly lonesome, Percival returned to Kensington, resolved to abandon a world that could not appreciate him, and devote himself to bucolic pursuits. But this kind of life was not to his temperament or his liking. He brooded over his failure to shine as a poet. Once he suddenly disappeared into the woods, where he remained several days. He became so eccentric that his friends were in constant fear lest he do himself harm. A sympathetic friend, speaking of this period, says he would throw down his rake, on a summer afternoon, and running with frantic leaps to the house, would shut himself up for hours.

The following winter he found more congenial conditions in teaching the district school in Wolcott. But he had already laid the foundation for an erratic career. One day he suddenly dismissed the school and started for home. This astonished the steady-going people of the village, but recalling that the schoolmaster was a poet, they wondered no longer. His act was but an eccentricity of genius.

Percival shut himself up for a time, and finally concluded to return to college; so one day when his brother was bringing a load of apples to New Haven, he jumped on the cart and rode into town. He had no sooner gotten well established than he was taken ill. Doctor Eli Ives came in all the splendor of ruffled shirt, bright waistcoat, knee breeches, silk stockings and silver buckles, and attended him. This short illness was a godsend, for it brought about one of the strongest friendships of Percival's remarkable life.

During this period of his college career he did not allow poetical work to interfere with his regular studies. He wrote on the half-holidays, Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, and was so good a student that he ranked with the best of his class.

Jeremiah Day, president of the college, in a certificate, said he "was among the most distinguished in his class in talents and literary acquirements."

According to the Rev. William B. Sprague, D.D., one of his classmates, "he was of about middle size, of light complexion, of an agreeable face that did not easily change its expression, and as shy as the most modest little girl you ever saw. He seemed to be

essentially of a solitary turn. * * * * * Everybody looked upon him as a good-natured, sensitive, thoughtful, odd, gifted fellow."

In his dress and appearance he was eccentric. When it was the custom to shave, he let his beard grow; and when others wore beards, he shaved. When the prevailing fashion required the hair to be worn long, his was cut short; and vice versa.

Most of the poems which he now wrote were posted anonymously about the college buildings. Then he would wait around conveniently near to hear them read and commented upon.

Percival suffered from a peculiarity of speech which he seemed unable to overcome, and always spoke in a low tone of voice, either to hide the imperfection, or because of his extreme shyness. During his senior year his standing was such that he fairly expected to win the valedictory, but on account of his impediment decided not to try for it. Doctor Dwight said of him at this time that he was the most remarkable scholar he had known for many years. The Doctor seemed to understand his peculiar temperament, and told him that unless he engaged in some active employment he was a ruined man. Years later, when the greater part of his life had been wasted, he acknowledged the wisdom of the Doctor's advice.

Percival's father having been a physician, the son determined to adopt that profession. Being an enthusiastic botanist, he thought the two lines of study would go well together; and after reading a short time in Kensington, came to New Haven to study with Doctor Ives.

About this time, his classmate, the Rev. Horace Hooker, invited him to come to Hartford, and promised to introduce him into literary society. This was an opportunity he had been wanting. His idea of society was that some man of genius should be the lodestone, and discourse learnedly to an admiring company. He accordingly made great preparation, and felt that he was about to make a social hit; but the whole thing fell flat. People paid no attention to him. He returned to New Haven vowing that Hartford was of mighty little account anyway, and wrote a poem about it which he called "An Imprecation." Here are some extracts:

"Ismir! fare thee well forever!
From thy walls with joy I go;
Every tie I freely sever,
Flying from thy den of woe.

"Ismir! land of cursed deceivers,
Where the sons of darkness dwell,
Hope, the cherub's base bereavers,—
Hateful city! Fare thee well.

"Wrapped in sheets of gory lightning,
While cursed night-hags ring thy knell,
May the arm of vengeance bright'ning,
O'er thee wave the sword of hell!"

Poor Percival was always getting into trouble, and what must he do next but fall in love with a clergyman's daughter. This did not go very far, however, for the minister objected—and got his rhythmic reward:

"And thou, arch-moral-murderer! hear my curse!
Go gorge and wallow in thy priestly sty!
Than what thou art I cannot wish thee worse:
Then with thy kindred reptiles crawl and die!"

Percival pursued his medical studies for a time, but one day threw down his books and started for home. After living in seclusion a few weeks, he decided to try the law, but soon gave this up and went back to Doctor Ives. Tiring of this, he tried to get a tutorship in college, but failed. Soon after he became a private tutor in the family of Judge Chauncey of Philadelphia. While there, he read law with the judge, and was admitted to the bar. But he tired of Philadelphia, came back to New Haven, and asked Doctor Ives to let him resume the study of medicine. The Doctor did all he could to encourage Percival to a steady purpose. The science of botany was then in its infancy, so far as America was concerned. Doctor Ives was greatly interested, and had begun the translation of Pursh's "Plants of North America," which was written in Latin; but was too busy to continue. He turned his manuscript over to Percival, who worked with great enthusiasm for two weeks, when he concluded he would like something else better, and threw it up. The long-suffering Doctor got a friend to complete the work, and for many years it yielded an average annual income of one thousand dollars.

Percival presently found another tutorship in Philadelphia. His pupil was his patron's only daughter. One day he accidentally touched her hand, which sent a strange thrill through his whole economy. He tried to speak, but his tongue clave to

the roof of his mouth. Finally seizing his hat, he rushed out of the room and took the first boat for New York. He remained there a short time with friends. Then he came back to New Haven, and suggested to Doctor Ives that it might be a good idea to take up the study of medicine. He stuck this time, and took his degree. A recommendation from Professor Silliman, referring to this time, ends with this curious sentence: "All who have the pleasure of his acquaintance recognize him as a man of the mildest manners and of inoffensive deportment."

The Yale Medical School had been recently established, and Percival was employed to deliver a course of lectures on anatomy. He also pursued the study of languages with considerable zeal, and spent a good deal of time among the Indians for that purpose.

This may be the time when he wrote the poem "To Seneca Lake," with one exception his best piece of work.

To Seneca Lake.

On thy fair bosom, silver lake,
  The wild swan spreads his snowy sail,
And round his breast the ripples break,
  As down he bears before the gale.

On thy fair bosom, waveless stream,
  The dipping paddle echoes far,
And flashes in the moonlight gleam,
  And bright reflects the polar star.

The waves along thy pebbly shore,
  As blows the north wind, heave their foam,
And curl around the dashing oar,
  As late the boatman hies him home.

How sweet, at set of sun, to view
  Thy golden mirror spreading wide,
And see the mist of mantling blue
  Float around the distant mountain's side!

At midnight hour, as shines the moon,
  A sheet of silver spreads below,
And swift she cuts, at highest noon,
  Light clouds, like wreaths of purest snow.

On thy fair bosom, silver lake,
  O! I could ever sweep the oar,
When early birds at morning wake,
  And evening tells us toil is o'er.

Percival had now reached the age of twenty-five, and opened an office in Kensington, for the practice of medicine. All went well for a time, but a malignant fever raged in the town, and he was powerless to cope with it. His patients died on every hand, and he lost five in one day. This failure caused great mental dejection, and everything went wrong. He afterward said: "I could not bear to have people looking to me for relief and not be able to relieve them." But the crowning exasperation was yet to come. One day a man came to dispute the size of a bill he had received. After some preliminaries the Doctor advised him—gratis—to go to a certain place which he particularly specified, and threw his ledger into the fire.

Percival now found himself sick of the world and all that in it was. This illness he thought to cure by calling in Doctor Cupid. He wrote to the young lady in Philadelphia, offering his heart and hand and all his worldly goods, which at that time consisted of the ledger accounts he had thrown into the fire. The reply was courteous, though prompt and negative.

It is pretty well agreed that Percival, for a long time poorly balanced, at this time completely lost his equilibrium. He brooded over his troubles for days at a time. His actions became so strange that his friends were alarmed. One day while walking with an acquaintance he suddenly started on a run across a field, and threw himself with great force, head first, against a stone wall. On other occasions he was seen to run and strike his head against trees. Once he tried suicide with opium, and again with a pistol—when the mania suddenly left him, never to return.

After these attempts at self-destruction he wrote a remarkable poem called "The Suicide," too long to quote in full; but an extract or two will serve to show its character.

"The light of Heaven was gone,—ambition still
Lurked with him to the last, but he was blind:
And genius struggled on through every ill,
But peace and innocence were left behind.

* * * * *

"His way had been unequal,—now he soared
On rushing wings, and now he sunk in night;
But then he felt new life around him poured,
He aimed to Heaven his strong, untiring flight.

"'Twas but a moment,—like the dying flash,
The soul's last sparkle, ere its lights are fled;
Then folly came, his kindling hopes to dash,
And hide his spirit with the moral dead.

* * * * *

"An outcast, self-condemned, he takes his way,
He knows and cares not whither; he can weep
No more,—his only wish his head to lay
In endless death and everlasting sleep.

* * * * *

"What if I pry beyond the yawning grave;
Is there a light can point my wildered way?
Is there an arm of Mercy stretched to save?
O help that arm, and guide me, genial ray!

"I look, but all is darker than the gloom
That hung, a sooty mist, o'er Egypt's land;
I listen, all is stiller than the tomb;
There is no ray,—no Mercy's outstretched hand.

"Come, then, each busy devil to my breast,
Come every fiend of hell and nestle there!
Rack me! Religion cannot give me rest;
If Mercy will not whisper,—yell, Despair."

During all this time he had been doing more or less writing, and now gathered his poems into a volume for publication. A good many of them had been printed in a small local paper called "The Microscope." The book was published in New Haven at Percival's expense. It found considerable favor, and Edward Everett reviewed it in the "North American," saluting the author's work as the harbinger of literary triumphs.

Percival had an original way of circulating his poems. He did not personally sell any, but as he sat in his room and saw a person passing whom he would like to have read them, he would rush down the stairs with a book in his hand, read it to the passer-by and say, "Here, take that," and rush back upstairs without another word.

In 1821, at the age of twenty-six, he became curator of a botanical garden which had been formed by Doctor Ives, his constant friend. Seeds had been collected from different parts of the world, the King

of France having sent over a thousand varieties. Percival entered upon his work with great zest, but was soon taken ill with a fever, and on his recovery abandoned the enterprise.

A few months later, Percival found himself stranded in Charleston, S. C., after an unsuccessful lecture tour. He opened an office there for the practice of medicine, and while waiting for patients who never came, wrote some poems for the Charleston Courier, the first literary paper of the South. These attracted attention, and brought him in connection with many cultivated people. He said one day, that when people were sick they would never send for a poet to cure them, and was obliged to close his office. He remained some weeks as the honored guest of the best houses in Charleston. This was doubtless the happiest period of his unhappy life, though he was entirely without means and undecided as to the future. An advertisement in the Charleston Courier, offering to deliver a course of lectures on botany for five dollars, indicates his financial condition.

Among the poems which he wrote at this time was "The Coral Grove," his one poem that survives his generation, though some collections also include "Seneca Lake."

Percival had for some time been gathering material for a publication called the "Clio," which was to be issued in numbers at irregular periods, as rapidly as sufficient material could be gotten together. This was to consist of both prose and poetical compositions of his own writing. The first part was published in Charleston by the New Haven Babcocks, who had a

branch store there. The venture brought him no money, but some reputation.

He found it impossible to maintain himself in the South, and sailed for New York. The morning after his departure, Mr. A. S. Willington, editor of the Courier, paid him a graceful tribute from which we make an extract:

"Percival, the American poet, who is reaping in the praises of his countrymen throughout the Union the fruits of his genius and the harvest of his hopes, left Charleston yesterday in the Empress for New York. It is honorable to this country, that his talents should be so generally appreciated. He is destined to outlive many generations after this in the annals of men.

"We, in Charleston, loved him for the artless simplicity, the delicate sensitiveness, the sweet timidity of his spirit and his manner; and we admired the amazing fertility of his mind, always spontaneously pouring forth, as from an exhaustless spring, pure and beautiful and unearthly thoughts.

"We sympathized with him too, for he was at times melancholy and dejected, as Genius is when it is on the earth."

Percival had now achieved a high reputation not only as a promising poet, but as a scholar of more than ordinary accomplishments. There were some in New Haven who recognized in him poetic qualities of a high order, and on his return from Charleston, whence his reputation had preceded him, he found a more general welcome. People who had laughed before now showed him attention, and he became somewhat of a social lion. He was not a good converser, but a charming monologist.

His original theory of conversation, which brought him such disaster in Hartford, still clung to him; but his talk, enriched as it now was by wide reading and extensive observation, never failed to charm. The stream of his discourse turned constantly into the field of poetry and criticism, to the delight of his listeners.

Percival possessed a rare penetration which quickly went to the bottom of every subject he investigated. When free to follow his bent, he became deeply absorbed, and his industry was untiring for a time; then he would switch off and pursue some other topic as relentlessly; and so on, never constant to one thing.

In the fall of 1822 he applied for a vacant professorship in Harvard University, but much to his disappointment, the Corporation decided to distribute the work among the other professors.

At this time he wrote a letter to a friend which throws some light on his condition of mind. "I returned here to New Haven, in April, and, like a fool, concluded to try authorship as a profession. * * * * I am utterly disgusted with authorship. * * * * I am determined never to write another line of poetry. A young lady whom I once taught, and loved too, to whom I was so devoted that I am ashamed of it, has lately, I understand, been engaged to a young Episcopal clergyman—so the black coat ran away with beauty. After all, what a silly thing it is to regret a woman!—dear sensibility, those sighs, and tears, and glances, and whispers, that cheek of roses, and bosom of heaped-up lilies, and eye of diamond,

and breath like the perfume of Arabia, what nonsense and what stark lies, too, it begets at the pure effervescence of a heavenly spirit, and ends in—straw."

In spite of the kindness that was shown him at this period, Percival felt that he was neglected. He wrote to a friend: "I am really ashamed to say anything of myself since my return here. I have been left entirely alone. There seems to be, in the better circles of New Haven,—if there are such,—(New Haven has picked up wonderfully since) a marked neglect, a studied determination not to know me."

About this time Percival was invited to read a poem before the Phi Beta Kappa at Yale, and accepted. But as the time drew near, he refused to have anything to do with it. He was willing, however, to give an oration, and this was substituted. But when he had proceeded a little way, he sat down, and declined to go on.

He had previously published Part I of a poem which he called "Prometheus," and about this time a second part was published by Mr. Maltby in New Haven. It was favorably reviewed and sold well. The author was gratified by a generous comment by Mr. Whittier, who characterized it as "a noble poem, grand and darkly majestic, with no affectedness about it." He quoted the following stanza, characterizing it as of "unrivalled excellence":

> "Thine are the mountains, where they purely lift
> Snows that have never wasted, in a sky
> Which hath no stain; below the storm may drift
> Its darkness, and the thunder-gust roar by,

Aloft in thy eternal smile they lie
Dazzling but cold ; thy farewell glance looks there,
And when below thy hues of beauty die,
Girt round them as a rosy belt, they bear
Into the high, dark vault a brow that still is fair."

Percival having become disgusted with medicine and authorship, and having never entered upon the practice of law, now cast about for some new profession; but they were becoming scarce, and the church seemed to be the only avenue left. He wrote a letter to a Trinity College professor, who replied that the decision was rather sudden and surprising, but expressed gratification. But alas for human depravity, the aspirant backslid. He dropped the church as suddenly as he had taken it up, and started for New York with a bundle of manuscript under his arm. He hired a room in a tenement quarter, and began to write poems. But his stove smoked, there was a din of wagons driving over the cobbled street, and perpetual yelling and shouting by teamsters and children. To put a cap to the climax, the Frenchman next door fiddled *ad infinitum ad nauseam*—and Pagăssus flew out of the window. The distracted poet was finally rescued by James Fenimore Cooper, who took him to his house, where he spent several weeks, meeting FitzGreene Halleck and other congenial people. Mr. Halleck afterward said: "All appreciated and admired him alike as a man and a man of letters, and were very desirous that he should become a resident of New York and make authorship a pursuit as well as a pastime, with a view to which they tried to persuade him to publish a new volume of poems."

On Percival's return to New Haven, Colonel William L. Stone, editor of the Commercial Advertiser, wrote, offering to carry the proposed volume through the press. Certain free opinions regarding religion abounding in the manuscript, Percival was informed that an alteration of this would add both to his fame and his profit; but the poet declined to make any change. He also found himself unable to advance the sum of forty dollars, which was necessary to carry on the work of publication. Colonel Stone wrote him that he would see Cooper in a day or two, and presumed there would be no difficulty. The Colonel even offered Percival the hospitality of his home that he might write additional poems, which were expected and promised for the volume; but "he absolutely refused to alter a line or to write anything new." A lady who saw a good deal of the poet at this time, wrote: "Percival was very eccentric, and I think at last deranged."

After remaining a while in absolute poverty, Percival undertook the editorship of the Connecticut Herald, an occupation which he considered humiliating. He thought that in becoming an editor, he had forfeited, not only his self-respect, but the respect of his acquaintances. He writes to one of these, and makes haste to explain that his descent to this degrading level is not because of any deterioration in his own character, but purely a matter of necessity. He exclaims disgustedly; "Editor of a newspaper! Has it come to this!"

He now writes: "Farewell to the Muses! How can people ask such delicate creatures as the Muses

to bide the pelting of the pitiless storm! I did rely somewhat on the patronage of my countrymen. They have punished me most cruelly for my wrong confidence. I will not quarrel with them. I ask nothing of a people who could lavish their patronage on such a vulgar book as 'The Pioneers.' (He has already forgotten Cooper's kindness.) They and I are well quit. They neglect me, and I despise them. Where will they go to find one who can do that justice to despised American genius that I can? But I will not do it, while I am so neglected—shall I say abused?—as I have been." The Herald became bankrupt, and Percival was again without occupation.

A letter to his friend, James Lawrence Yvonnett, (he is now twenty-eight) expresses a determination to return to Berlin and live with his mother, who has remarried. An extract shows his desperation, and at the same time throws an interesting sidelight upon a contemporary who had not yet attained his highest fame:

"I am determined to go again to the home where I was born. I can have a chamber there; and although it is now no home to me, yet it is better than any other place in my power of choosing. I abandon New Haven. I have not a solitary friend here, not one congenial mind, not one whom I associate with. I have lately had some intimacy with Morse, while taking a portrait of my phiz. Your judgment is not far from correct. He is a good artist, and has a mind much above the common level."

Friendly influence secured for him, through John C. Calhoun, then Secretary of War, a professorship at

West Point. But he had been there only a short time when he began to deluge his friends with complaints, charging that the pay was not large, the duties were not light, and he had no time to write poetry; he was suffering from loss of reputation; his lodgings were not in accord with his rank; his allowance for a servant and horse was not what it should be; his house leaked and the chimney smoked, and the place was full of cracks and rats. To complete the indignity, the building had a common entry and staircase, so that he was obliged to meet other officers as he came and went; thus obliging heaven-born genius to rub elbows with the uninspired! He wrote: "This is a fine way of encouraging American talent! It will never do!"

His patient friends had him transferred to Boston as Post Surgeon, and all nature rejoiced. He was invited to deliver the Phi Beta Kappa poem at Cambridge, and Edward Everett was to deliver an oration. Percival expected to win new reputation on that occasion, but when the time drew near he refused to have anything to do with it, and someone else had to be secured in his place.

The office of Post Surgeon in Boston carried a good salary and few duties; but Percival found the salary too small, and the duties too large, and began to solicit his expiring friends to secure him a clerkship at Washington. They decided to state the matter frankly to Mr. Calhoun, explain the poet's eccentricities, and ask for a clerkship. Mr. Calhoun received them pleasantly, heard them through, and remarked that it was a nice day.

A few months later Percival was offered a professorship of languages in the Hampden-Sidney College in Virginia. This was exactly what he wanted, but just as soon as he found he could have what he wanted, he didn't want it any more; and he declined the offer.

Then came all sorts of projects and experiments. He started a paper of his own in Boston, and went so far as to issue a prospectus and get a large subscription list; but no farther. From there he went to New York as editor of the Atheneum, at a salary of one thousand dollars per year; but the proprietor, like everybody else, was unreasonable and the engagement was broken.

By this time, Percival had become so well known that the press began to pitch into him, and make sport of his eccentricities, until he was driven almost insane. But for the kindness of Edward Everett Hale, then a young man, the result might have been disastrous. Hale, in the Boston Advertiser, set matters as far right as possible, by explaining Percival's peculiarities, and reminding the public of his high character and scholarly attainments. As a result, adverse criticism almost entirely ceased.

The following year, he volunteered to read the Phi Beta Kappa poem at the Yale commencement. When the time came he declined to read it, but on being urged, rushed it through at such a rate, that the scene, according to a letter from one of his friends, was a "laughable one."

Percival was now thirty years old and as undecided as ever. The next scheme was to go to Europe, write a journal of his travels and have it published in book

form. He found a publisher who was willing to advance eight hundred dollars for a visit to the British Isles, where he was to spend six months and send home six hundred pages of journal. If this took well he was to have five hundred dollars for six months in France, and the same number of pages; the same for Germany, etc. It would seem that to an impoverished student this arrangement would be a godsend. But Percival finally threw it up, on the ground that "the number of pages was too great for the time, and the compensation too small for the number of pages!"

About this time there was a review of Percival in the North American by Henry Ware, Jr., and this was perhaps the fairest of all contemporary criticisms. It was carried on at considerable length, under the theory, as Mr. Ware said, that "Mr. Percival was too important a man, and his example of too great influence, to be sparing in the use of the scalpel." He then went on to say, "There is an excessive diffuseness in the style of Mr. Percival. It is not sufficiently compact. It wants pith and point; it lacks the energy which conciseness imparts. Everything is drawn out as far as possible; always flowing and sweet, and therefore sometimes languid and monotonous. His poetry is too much diluted. It consists too much in words, which are music to the ear, but too often send a feeble echo of the sense to the mind. There is also a superabundance of images in proportion to the thoughts. They skip about the magical scene in such numbers, that they stand in the way of one another and of the main design. He is too careless in selection; whatever occurs to him he puts down and lets it remain. * * * * *

Everything wears an extemporaneous and unfinished appearance. Strength and weakness are most strangely combined, and passages of surpassing elegance and magnificence are crowded in amongst those that are slovenly and incomplete. Hence it is rare to meet with a paragraph of any length equally sustained throughout. Flaws show themselves in the most brilliant sentences, and the reader is compelled to stop with a criticism in the midst of his admiration."

For the next few years Percival was chiefly employed, when employed at all, in revising for American uses a foreign geography, and correcting the proof sheets of Webster's Dictionary. In this latter service his work was unquestionably of great value. He was a more profound scholar in many respects than Doctor Webster. The original contract merely called for the revision of proof sheets, but it soon became necessary for him, in order to save extra revision of proof, to correct the whole of Doctor Webster's manuscript before it went to the printer. He found this work so agreeable, that he afterwards said to a friend: "I took more pleasure in editing Webster's Dictionary than in anything else I have done."

Percival had gradually lost his ambition to shine as a poet, and from this time on wrote only occasionally; but he had become one of the most accomplished linguists of his day. He sometimes versified in German, and other foreign languages, and at one time wrote a poem in Danish on the occasion of one of Ole Bull's appearances. Mr. Bull took the poem, read it, and simply remarked that there were a few mistakes in it.

In 1834, at the age of thirty-nine, he was engaged to write a history of the United States. He was to have five hundred dollars advanced him each year until its completion, and then a percentage of profits on sales. He collected a large quantity of material, began the history, but had only written a few pages when he gave it up.

In 1835, through the influence of friends, he was appointed to make a geological survey of the State of Connecticut, which occupied his time for the next five years. This involved the covering on foot of almost every acre of ground in the state. While on these expeditions his clothes frequently became shabby to such a degree that he was often taken for a tramp. He was obliged to take his meals and lodgings where ever night chanced to find him, usually with people of humble condition. One evening he presented himself at the door of a young ladies' seminary, and requested a night's lodging. The lady principal was averse to the proposition. He urged that he was tired and hungry, and felt unable to walk farther. The madam looked him over carefully, thought he appeared more intelligent than most beggars, and being kind-hearted, led him into the kitchen, where she gave him something to eat. She thought it would not be safe to leave him there alone, lest he walk off with his knife and fork. So she stayed in the room and kept her eye on him. The visitor seemed inclined to talk, and before she knew it, the hostess found herself conversing with one of the most charming men she had ever met. The talk finally turned to poetry, and she asked him if he had ever read Percival. He

replied he had given that poet special attention, and she expressed her enthusiastic admiration. Percival liked this, and let it go on. He finally disclosed his name, and said he sometimes wrote poetry; and during the rest of his stay he was claimed as an honored guest.

Percival's labors while on this survey were unquestionably of great value. He made a large collection of specimens, and these he kept in one of his rooms in the hospital. The building then being substantially empty, he was able to secure three rooms at a moderate rent. This amount was paid regularly for a short time, then irregularly, and finally not at all; but he was allowed to remain a free tenant. As remarked at the outset, he never permitted visitors to enter his apartments. If a stranger knocked at the door to pay his respects, Percival would cautiously put out his head and say "Boo," at which the hero-worshiper would usually flee in mortal terror. Percival's "Boo" was long drawn out, and resembled a smothered groan. On one occasion Mr. Longfellow came to see him, and on recognizing the visitor he recalled his half-uttered "Boo," but declined to let the poet enter. He took him downstairs, however, and entertained him in one of the lower rooms. On another occasion a gentleman of rather loud bearing was escorting some ladies through the hospital grounds. Somehow he learned that Percival had rooms in the building and asked the janitor to show him up. The janitor was a humorist, and consented. When they arrived at the door, the janitor knocked, while the stranger drew himself up with a lady on

each arm. The door slowly opened and an old man put out his head. The stranger struck an attitude and began rather pompously, "I am extremely happy and rejoiced that I have the honor of addressing the poet Percival;" but he had proceeded no further when the poet said "Boo," and shut the door.

Percival had a good deal of trouble with the legislature over his geological survey. He had a large mass of material to classify and describe, and seemed in no hurry about making the report. The legislature was not as patient as his personal friends had grown to be. The law required that the geologist should not be paid until his report had been approved by the governor. Accordingly when it was finished, Percival took it and waited upon Governor Ellsworth, who promised to examine and pass upon it as soon as possible. The surveyor insisted that neither the governor nor any one else was competent to pass upon the merits of his report, and refused to submit to the indignity, though at this time he was reduced almost to starvation. He took his report and withdrew, saying he would rather go without his pay than accept it on such conditions. His friends, as usual, came to the rescue. One of them, by a ruse, got possession of the report, submitted it to the governor, who instantly approved it, and Percival got his pay.

From this point on in his career, there is little to record. In his old age—I say old, because his life of privation and poverty rendered him prematurely old—he became engaged in a geological survey of the State of Wisconsin. While there his friends pur-

chased a lot on Park Street, New Haven, and began the erection of a house in which it was expected he would spend his declining years. Percival drew the plans and authorized the operations. The house was a peculiar structure, one story high, with three narrow windows in front, and the only entrance at the rear. Percival came east to see it, and talked enthusiastically of the time when he should live there simply and contentedly among his books and treasures.

It was pitiful to see the old man, bent and feeble, walk up and down the street, and look affectionately upon his home, from which he was forced to be exiled by his imperative engagements in the West. In his younger days he would have broken those engagements without hesitation. There was now something pathetic in his absolute fidelity to his trust. He wept like a child when he finally tore himself away, and set his face toward his duty. The sun of his life was almost at its setting, though he did not know it. He resumed his labors in Wisconsin, and appeared to be happier then than he had been since his stay in Charleston, more than thirty years before, when he was hailed as the rising star of American letters. His literary ambition was now dead. His chief delight was in living close to Nature's heart, and unlocking the secrets which lay hidden in her bosom. He was fond of children, and would often go out of his way to give them a ride in his buggy.

He became a familiar figure in the fields and woods of Wisconsin, and was generally known as "Old

Stonebreaker." Some of the boys made sport of him, but the little children all over the state knew and loved him. He was always poorly clad, and suffered greatly from exposure in winter. In December, 1855, he caught a severe cold at Hazel Green, and took to his bed. His attending physician thought it only a temporary indisposition, but Percival said, "No, I am worn out." He grew steadily worse, and it was apparent that he could not last long. The physician asked if he wished to be buried in New Haven. "No," was the reply, "let them bury me here, and let my remains be undisturbed." He lingered until the following May, when his strange and varied career came to an end.

During his life, Percival had many sincere admirers. Nathaniel P. Willis said of him: "He is, I am sure, the purest and most mere man of genius possible to our race." The pathos of that erratic life must be felt by all who know it. His capacities and aspirations may justify Willis's estimate. His lack of ability to criticise and perfect his work cost him a permanent place in American letters.

A single incident may show what was expected of him. In 1828, when Percival was thirty-three years old, George P. Morris arranged to publish in a group the portraits of "nine living American poets." Percival occupied the center, and around him were Bryant, Pierpont, Irving, Halleck, Sprague, Pinkney, Woodworth and Brooks. Percival promised most, with even Bryant a secondary consideration. Perhaps the reversal is easily understood. While Percival was complaining of a world that did not appreciate his

hastily-wrought poems, Bryant was polishing and perfecting his until they compelled appreciation and admiration.

Ask one of the younger booksellers for a volume of Percival, and a blank stare will greet you—sad commentary on the once "rising star of American letters!" School children, who are taught the masterpieces of our poets, never hear of him. Students in our colleges give him but a glance in passing to the wealth of more highly wrought products of genius. The critic lays down a pasteboard covered volume that has drifted in from an old book-stall, and sighs: "Oh, what might have been—what genius gone to waste!"

A few years ago some admirers collected a fund, and erected a monument over the grave at Hazel Green.

It bears this inscription:

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL
born in
BERLIN CONNECTICUT
September 15 1795
Graduated at Yale College
B A 1815 M D 1820
State Geologist
of
CONNECTICUT 1833 1842
State Geologist
of
Wisconsin 1854 1856
Died in Hazel Green
May 2 1856

EMINENT AS A POET
RARELY ACCOMPLISHED AS A
LINGUIST
LEARNED AND ACUTE IN SCIENCE
A MAN WITHOUT GUILE

The following poem, so full of beauty that one must grieve the more for its lack of finish, is universally considered Percival's best, his literary monument.

The Coral Grove.

Deep in the wave is a coral grove,
Where the purple mullet and gold-fish rove,
Where the sea-flower spreads its leaves of blue,
That never are wet with falling dew,
But in bright and changeful beauty shine,
Far down in the green and glassy brine.
The floor is of sand, like the mountain drift,
And the pearl shells spangle the flinty snow;
From coral rocks the sea plants lift
Their boughs, where the tides and billows flow;
The water is calm and still below,
For the winds and the waves are absent there,
And the sands are bright as the stars that glow
In the motionless fields of upper air:
There, with its waving blade of green,
The sea-flag streams through the silent water,
And the crimson leaf of the dulse is seen
To blush like a banner bathed in slaughter:
There, with a light and easy motion,
The fan-coral sweeps through the clear deep sea
And the yellow and scarlet tufts of ocean
Are bending like corn on the upland lea:
And life, in rare and beautiful forms,
Is sporting amid those bowers of stone,
And is safe, when the wrathful Spirit of storms,
Has made the top of the waves his own:
And when the ship from his fury flies,
Where the myriad voices of Ocean roar,
When the wind-god frowns in the murky skies,
And demons are waiting the wreck on shore:
Then, far below, in the peaceful sea,
The purple mullet and gold-fish rove,
Where the waters murmur tranquilly,
Through the bending twigs of the coral grove.

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